



Tracking Down James Bond

# Reader's Digest

AUGUST 2010

rd-india.com

## You Can Be Rich!

But it's your social reputation,  
not cash, that will really matter



### ARTHRITIS

Here's new  
hope for the  
old scourge

### SAVE TAX EASILY

while you  
fulfil your  
financial goals

### PLUS

- Pak's terror tricks
- Trans fats in our food
- Delhi's eve-teasers
- All about school

# From the Editor

## Your Karma Points

**Before you read** the cover story “We’re All Going to Be Rich,” consider that *rich* originally meant powerful. It also means an abundance of wealth. But *wealth* originally derived from the Old English word for being well. So, rich here does not mean money alone, but social capital. The article is about a maverick millionaire who will tell you that money beyond a point won’t make you any happier, but building social connections will. Follow his advice: Do good deeds, build lasting relationships, and you’ll have a wealth of karma points. Welfare will follow naturally—a better way to get rich.



Poor or rich, Indians are known for our very high heart-disease risk. Why, much of our food is fried and loaded with harmful fats. Our intake of high-calorie junk foods and snacks has also risen and now even Indian children are obese. So, reading “What’s the Fuss About Trans Fats?” (see page 142) has hit me so hard, I’ve cut down on pastries and haven’t touched anything deep fried since. I hope it has the same effect on you.

In Everyday Heroes (page 24), we have Subhash Dalvi, a Mumbai municipal employee who’s helping his city in a powerful way—by getting people to stop using plastic bags, which can cause enormous environmental damage. There must be people like Dalvi making a difference in your town or village. Let us know. Our writers would like to meet them and make their stories known, since people like Dalvi are the heart of Reader’s Digest.

This time’s Your Money (page 68) is about income tax and financial goals, but, for easy reading, we do not quote a single Section from the tax Acts. “Neighbours Like These” (page 45) is another eye-opener about how both Pakistan and Afghanistan have managed to fool the US into funding their terrorist ambitions. We should know!

*Mohan Sivanand*

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## Healing Touch

I am a cancer survivor and I can very well understand the love and solace required by cancer patients [Angel for Cancer's Untouchables, June].

Harmala truly is an angel.

*J. Thomas, Secunderabad*

After retiring, I've been feeling that my life is empty. However, I was jolted out of this after reading Harmala's story. I realize that I can very well reach out to people who need a caring hand.

*Marie Solomon, Hyderabad*

## Flying High

Any country should be proud of such a down-to-earth, imaginative and hard-working person as Tony Fernandes [Dreamers, June]. Thanks to AirAsia's affordable fares, my family and I visited Singapore and Malaysia recently.

*Philipose Joshua, Trivandrum*

## 21 Dreadful Months

The Emergency was a tragic occurrence that bulldozed our hard-earned freedom in one single blow ["My Sly Emergency Rap," June].



**I was operated on** for colon cancer two decades ago, and have survived the disease. Harmala's inspiring story is an eye-opener for people like me to contribute to society in a meaningful way.

*Shashikala Shastri, New Delhi*

We are lucky that we can breathe free air once again.

*Prem K. Menon, Mumbai*

I was teaching in a college during the Emergency, and I enjoyed real freedom on campus and peace of mind in general. Look now: A country plagued by Maoist control in many of our villages, terrorism, galloping inflation and other complex problems. Radically speaking, perhaps an occasional shock treatment might be good for the survival of our democracy.

*George John Nidhiry, Kottayam*

During the Emergency trains and buses ran on time, productivity

increased, and there was punctuality in workplaces. Without being branded as an apologist for dictatorship, I wish that the work culture we saw during the Emergency could become a permanent feature for all time.

*C.P. Srinivasan, Chennai*

I liked the obituary ad so much that I even kept the cutting with my service records after I retired.

*Vasant Mohile, Thane*

I carried a clipping of the ad to school and it was passed on secretly for all the boys to see. Most Indians who went through that phase have their own stories to tell. How precious and fragile our freedom is and how we take it for granted!

*Ajay Shukla, New Delhi*

Mahadevan, Ashok, beloved son of Satire, loving father of free journalism, brother of Valour, Fortitude, and Acumen, fought against the disease named Emergency.

*Prateek, Delhi*

## Crocodile Fears

At first I thought it was a prize-winning photograph [Our India, June], but reading the contents filled me with grief. The authorities must warn people about crocodiles.

*S. Saran, Visakhapatnam*

With sustained effort, the forest officials have however succeeded in capturing the crocodile and it has been kept under captivity. Efforts

are on to sensitize visitors on the ocean and the coastal waters of these islands, which also contain some dangerous animals like any place on earth.

*Principal Chief Conservator of Forests*

*(Wild Life), Port Blair*



*Signs like the one above, used internationally, will also help warn people in the future.*

—Eds

## Feathered Triumph

It is heartening to read that the Ministry of Environment has moved to ban the use of peacock feathers. I too cannot help thinking it was due to Reader's Digest [Our India, May] highlighting the cruel practice of killing these birds for their feathers.

*Beena Mathur, Pune*

## To Kill a Mocking Profession

You could read Harper Lee's book a hundred times [The Book that Changed My Life, May] and learn a hundred new things from it. Maycomb, Alabama, could have been any nondescript colony, such as the one in Hyderabad where I spent my childhood unravelling things as only a child can. We had our own Boo Radleys—odd people—in houses that looked forbidding.

I idolized and tried my best to



emulate Atticus Finch, the book's hero, while practising corporate law. Sadly, 10 years into it and I might as well chuck my profession, as these ideals just don't fit into the scheme of things as laid out by the crooks who comprised the managements that I mostly had to work with.

*Vijayshree K., Hyderabad*

■ **Vijayshree gets the Best Letter prize.** —Eds.

## Caring Dads

When feeding my baby was difficult [Lessons for New Dads, June], my husband stood by me throughout the night during this very stressful period. No one should underestimate the importance of the father, both for bringing up the child and for the mother's wellbeing.

*Vaishali Rawal, via e-mail*

## Seeking Paradise

It was inspiring to read "Escape from North Korea" [June]. Living in freedom is something we often take for granted. I hope the brave dreamers from North Korea, who fought in the face of fear, go on to live fulfilling lives.

*Deepan Kumar Sarkar, Kolkata*

## Spurious Drugs

Strange that this incident [Bad Medicine, June], where a plane from India carried spurious drugs, was not reported in newspapers here. I wonder whether it was all hushed up.

*Dr Raj Sethu, Coimbatore*

## Combating Allergies

To ward off allergies [Allergies: Nothing to Sneeze At, June], take a lot of water and adequate rock salt (not table salt), before reaching for antihistamines from the chemist's. Salt naturally reduces mucus.

*Aparna M. Sridhar, via e-mail*

Your tips for preventing allergies have come at the right time—when the chances of infection are high.

*Chitra B., via e-mail*

## Mother's Instinct

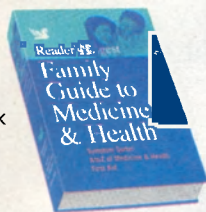
Every child, normal or abnormal, needs love and care that makes him feel secure [Love is Not Enough, June]. The patience and perseverance shown by Jenny Lexhed is unique and exemplary.

*Kaushik Desai, Ahmedabad*

Jenny Lexhed's triumph gives a new hope to parents who face similar difficulties. Love can prevail over ailments.

*Shubhanu Purohit, Kota*

The author of the best letter, chosen by the editors, will receive a prize: The Reader's Digest book *Family Guide to Medicine & Health* priced at Rs1199.



Send your letters for these pages to the Editorial address, or use e-mail: [editor.india@rd.com](mailto:editor.india@rd.com). Please include your phone number in all cases.



# ★Heroes



## “No Plastic Bags Here!”

Going far beyond the demands of his designation is this Mumbai corporation engineer **BY ADITYA SHARMA**

If you exit from the eastern side of Mumbai's suburban Vile Parle train station, you'll walk into one of the city's busiest markets, where scores of hawkers peddle everything from fruit and vegetables to flowers, utensils and clothes. It's like many city markets, but with one big difference: Nothing is sold in plastic

bags here. And don't be surprised if you spot an energetic man in his 40s who's greeted with warm smiles by the hawkers although he's not buying anything. That's Subhash Dalvi, a civil engineer with Mumbai's municipal corporation. Here at the market, not far from his government flat, Dalvi is not on official

duty—in fact he'll tell you that he's pursuing his "hobby."

"Have you enough paper and cloth bags?" Dalvi enquires of Badrinath Gupta, a middle-aged fruit-seller.

"*Han ji*" Gupta nods, pointing to a bundle of paper bags.

It was Dalvi who got everybody here to avoid plastic carry bags since March last year and use paper or cloth bags instead.

To tell the story of how Vile Parle East gave up plastic bags, Dalvi recalls a day in July 2000, when this suburb, where Mumbai airport is situated, saw unprecedented flooding after very heavy rains. Life was seriously disrupted, with people wading through knee-deep water. The culprit: a drainage system clogged with countless discarded plastic bags, and their biggest source was the market.

That evening, Dalvi called a meeting of friends, shop-owners and hawkers at Decent Chemists, a local medical store. "If we collect money to buy cloth and paper bags, we could avoid such flooding in future," he told those who had gathered. Soon they collected about Rs80,000 and used the money to supply free cloth and paper bags to vendors in and around the market and to print leaflets urging people to use their own shopping bags. Dalvi also got some volunteers and the police to spread his message.

It worked—only for about four months. But why did it fail? "There

was a lack of awareness about the environmental hazards that plastic can cause," says Bakulesh Thakkar, who owns the medical store. "And with no ban on plastic carry bags at the time, it was hard to get people to cooperate."

"The market is scattered over a large, undefined area," adds Dalvi. "It was no easy task, but I wasn't giving up."

**F**ive years later, on 26th July, 2005, Mumbai saw its worst-ever floods, which took about 1000 lives and caused untold damage to property. Once again, a city drainage system overwhelmed with discarded plastic bags was blamed. It had a positive impact though. Officials and citizens became more aware of the problem and the city banned thin—less than 50 microns—plastic bags. These are usually thrown away and not reused.

The ban worked for a while, but because enforcement went from lax at first to practically non-existent, all kinds of plastic bags were back in months. "The city is simply too big and too full of shops and unregulated hawkers for any such ban to really work, unless citizens avoid plastic bags on their own," explains Dalvi.

Thanks partly to Dalvi's persistence, early last year, Mumbai Mayor Shraddha Jadhav pleaded against the use of plastic carry bags. After that Dalvi decided to act again. By March 2009, he launched a fresh drive in

Vile Parle East, this time with some new strategies. He put up some money of his own and got friends to chip in. He also got the local Kapol Cooperative Bank to donate 50,000 cloth bags. Posters were put up and leaflets distributed urging hawkers and people to stop using plastic. And dustbins were placed outside many shops.

Dalvi and his volunteers also went about educating people on the subject. But it was hard to get many hawkers to agree. "Being a municipal official, Dalvi could have berated them for using the banned bags," says Rajgopal Nadar, a Vile Parle textile merchant. "Since that does not work in the long run, he chose kindness and good cheer instead."

Dalvi also tackled stubborn hawkers and small shopkeepers by explaining how plastic bags were actually eating into their profits. When they understood the arithmetic, they realized they could save Rs1000 to 2500 every month if they used paper or cloth bags instead.

"The hardest to convince were a group of women selling flowers," recalls Dalvi, "and I had to be tactful." Since they had school-going kids, Dalvi gave them geometry boxes and crayons as gifts to get them to comply. And they did. "I now save about Rs30 every day by wrapping flowers only in old newspapers," says Laxmi, a flower seller. "Even my kids are happy because I can buy them treats with some of the money I save."

Today, try asking any Vile Parle East vendor for a plastic carry bag. "No, not in this place," they'll tell you. Some of them may lend you sturdy cloth bags against a Rs10 deposit. Dalvi's crusade also provides income to several people who now sell paper and cloth bags.

**A**part from this, Dalvi has been active in other social causes. In 1993, he started a literacy drive at a Mumbai slum, with support from the National Literacy Mission. He got a 2001 National Youth Award for doing relief work in cyclone-hit Orissa and for a cleanliness drive he organized in Dharavi, Mumbai's biggest slum. Films Division made a documentary *Dharavi: A New Beginning* about it. Dalvi has also received the Paryavaran Ratna from the Mayor of Mumbai, and the municipal corporation's Clean Mumbai Award.

Subhash Dalvi's success in Vile Parle East might seem like a drop in the ocean for Mumbai. But that's created some welcome ripples, because his drive against plastic bags has spread to a few other Mumbai suburbs already.

"I have a vision of making the city free of plastic carry bags one day," says Dalvi. "With a little creativity and persistence, we can solve many of our problems." ■



**If you have an idea for everyday heroes from your locality, or a clipping from a newspaper, send it to us. We will pay Rs1000 for every idea selected.**



Right Here

# Right Now

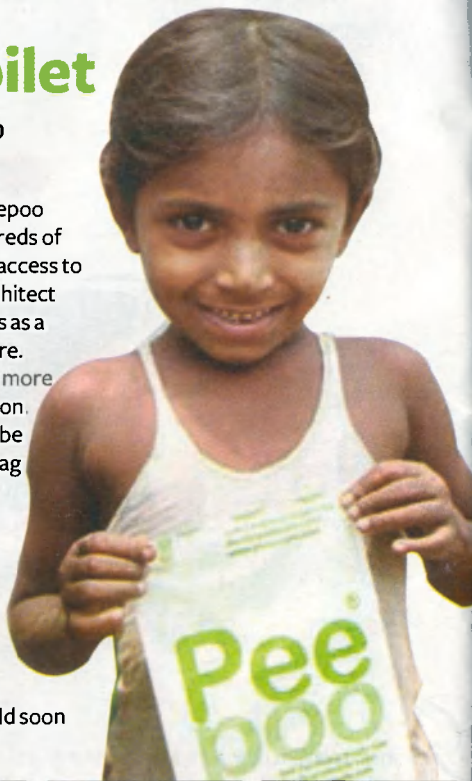
THE WHO / THE HOW / THE NOW

## Disposable toilet

New invention makes a trip to the loo truly worthwhile

A biodegradable plastic bag called the Peepoo could make life much easier for the hundreds of millions of urban slum dwellers who lack access to a toilet. The bag, designed by Swedish architect and professor Anders Wilhelmson, serves as a single-use toilet that can be used anywhere. "When you knot it, the smell is gone even more quickly than from a toilet," says Wilhelmson.

Peepoo features a layer of foil that can be used as a glove to shuttle waste into the bag without contaminating the fingers. Once the bag is closed off by knotting up the opening, urea crystals inside break down waste into pathogen-free fertilizer that can be used to help grow food. "You not only get the toilet, you also get an asset," says Wilhelmson. The Peepoo has been well received in tests by residents of Nairobi, Kenya and Bangladesh, and should soon be widely available.





## The answer is:

88

Between 1962 and 1985, American golfer Kathy

**Whitworth won 88 tournaments in the Ladies PGA—a record that remains unbroken, in men's or women's golf.**

88% of iPod touch users would recommend their devices to other people.

**The record for the world's heaviest man was held by Mexican Manuel Uribe, who weighed 88 stone (560 kilos) in 2006. He has since lost weight.**

**The International Whaling Commission has 88 member nations.**

There are 88 constellations officially recognized by the International Astronomical Union.

Space Shuttle Mission 88 (STS-88), launched in December 1998, **was the first mission to the International Space Station.**

## Beetles with pulling power

When it comes to the animal kingdom, there are many creatures that display impressive feats of strength. And none more so than a species of male dung beetle, the *Onthophagus taurus*. A new study has revealed that the powerful beetle can pull 1141 times its own body weight—the equivalent of a 70-kilo person pulling 80 tonnes. And it's all because of their unique mating arrangements. "Female beetles of this species dig tunnels ... where males mate with them. If a male enters a tunnel that is already occupied by a rival, they fight by locking horns and try to push each other out," says Dr Rob Knell, of Queen Mary College, University of London. "Some male dung beetles don't fight over females. They are smaller [and] weaker."



## Hand germ trails could help police finger criminals

Every time we touch an object, it seems we leave a unique trail of hand germs, or personal bacteria communities, along with our fingerprints, according to a new study. A research team from the University of Colorado, USA, took swabs from office keyboards and was able to match them to the bacteria on the fingertips of individual computer users. Says lead researcher Professor Noah Fierer: "The technique could eventually become a valuable item in the toolbox of forensic scientists."



## ► **Following Fish: Travels around the Indian coast**

By *Samanth Subramanian*. Penguin, Rs250.

### **Select a non-vegetarian**

Tamil Brahmin youth of average height, and not too skinny. Marinate him for two years in an American college. Fry him nicely in the thick masala of present-day Indian journalism. Finally garnish him with a round of yet more Western learning. Serve immediately.

That's the recipe for this delightful first book by Samanth Subramanian, a 29-year-old journalist with the business newspaper *Mint*. It's full of fresh flavours, and while some may feel it lacks 'gravytas,' it's certainly more fun to read than most of the stodgy tomes served these days.

The book is an account of Subramanian's travels in eight of India's nine coastal states (Orissa is inexplicably left out). And while Subramanian enthusiastically samples fish wherever he goes—except in Gujarat, where most of its fish is exported to other parts of the country—his book isn't just the tales of a fish foodie. As he puts it, "...fish can sit at the heart of many worlds—of culture, of

history, of sport, of commerce, of society," and *Following Fish* deals with a number of other subjects. In Gujarat, for instance, he learns about the building yards of Veraval and Mangrol, India's leading boat building towns. In Tamil Nadu, he studies the ambivalent feelings that the Paravas, a Catholic fishing community, have towards their church. And his chapter on Goa is an elegy on the state's fishermen,

**While some may feel it lacks 'gravytas,' it's more fun to read than most of the stodgy tomes served these days.**

who are being either swept away—or seduced—by the tourism industry.

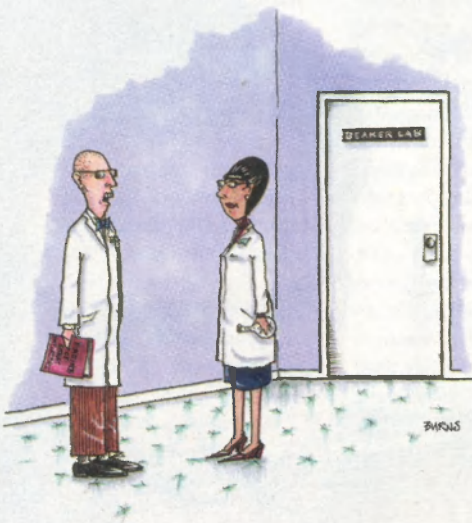
Unlike most Indian journalists, Subramanian has a nicely quirky way with words. When he watched fish being fried in coconut oil in Kerala, "...it smelled very familiar and yet very



wrong, as if somebody had decided to make tea with Head & Shoulders or salad dressing out of Brylcreem." Shown a hideous, snake-like fish called the beral, he felt "...its face was thuggish—definitely the sort of fish to avoid meeting in a dark, deserted bend of the river."

Subramanian is a devotee of a kind of journalism—exemplified by the American magazine *New Yorker*—in which articles tend to be extremely long and sprinkled with literary references. If you're one of those who prefer snappy, down-to-earth styles, you may occasionally get restless at Subramanian's leisurely pace. But be patient. This is a good book, well worth your time.

*Ashok Mahadevan*



*"We've just discovered that the universe is made up of billions of teeny-tiny cubicles."*

**D**uring a lecture on the function and use of adverbs, my colleague Wilson gave his students a sample sentence: "The dog barked loudly." He then asked a student, "How did the dog bark?" "Bow, wow!" he replied.

*Leonard Cutler, Coimbatore*

**When a patient** was wheeled into our emergency room, I was the nurse on duty. "On a scale of zero to ten,"

I asked her, "with zero representing no pain and ten representing excruciating pain, what would you say your pain level is now?"

She shook her head. "Oh, I don't know. I'm not good with maths."

*Don Andrews*

**In our storeroom,** we use a step-ladder to get items from the top shelf. But it's always in the way, and after banging my shin on it for the umpteenth time, I asked the staff to please keep it somewhere safe.

The next day, I found the ladder neatly collapsed and placed where it couldn't hurt anyone: on the top shelf.

*Kevin Su*

**I was working** at an airport cafeteria last summer when a French customer with little proficiency in English came in. However, despite my limited French, I was able to take his order.

I was fine till I asked him if he wanted bacon on his burger. I had forgotten the French word for bacon, so I wound up asking him, "Est-ce que tu veux un cochon sur ton hamburger?"

I came pretty close actually. It translates as, "Would you like a pig on your burger?"

*Lindsay Kylo*

**A sign outside a nursery: "It's spring! We're so excited, we wet our plants!"**

*Becky Adair*



# Our India

AN OPEN PHOTO-EDITORIAL



**E**ve-teasing is a phrase coined in India—in Delhi perhaps?—to trivialize the sexual harassment of women. The young ladies seen demonstrating in the photograph are all university students who need a break. Not from their studies, but from eve-teasers in the national capital, where 85.4 percent of the women interviewed say that sexual harassment is rampant in public places, according to an official survey released in July.

A Bill to prevent sexual harassment of women at the workplace is to be tabled in the current monsoon session of Parliament. But what

about the streets, where much of the worst harassment takes place?

“Usually nobody comes to a woman’s aid here, if you berate or try to expose a culprit,” says a young Delhi executive. “People are too apathetic or scared to get involved. We suffer silently.”

CCTVs in some public places could reduce the harassment. Since education always helps, schools too could address the problem early by teaching boys to be gentlemen. ■



Send us an idea for Our India, on something you feel strongly about—something that must change. You’ll get Rs3000 if your idea is accepted. Post it to RD Editorial, or e-mail: [editor.india@rd.com](mailto:editor.india@rd.com)



# In My Opinion

## Neighbours Like These ...

Experts believe that Pakistan deliberately keeps the Taliban and Al Qaeda strong so it can milk the US for more aid. And what about Afghanistan?

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

**A** platoon of US soldiers crouched in the darkness of Afghanistan one night in April 2009, awaiting a group of approaching Taliban fighters.

The soldiers of Second Platoon, Company B, had spent nine months fighting in the area, near the Pakistan border, and 11 of their members had been injured or killed. This time, Company B was primed for revenge. When the Taliban came close enough, the Americans hit them with automatic-weapons fire and grenades, mowing down at least a dozen enemy fighters. It was a decisive victory. But afterwards, the troops made a startling discovery.

A check of 30 magazines taken from the dead insurgents' rifles found that at least 17 held ammunition that

bore the distinctive factory stamps of US suppliers in California and the Czech Republic. The discovery—first made by a *New York Times* reporter who examined the ammunition at the scene, and later



confirmed by the Pentagon—hints at a long-feared situation: that American-supplied arms are winding up with those trying to kill US troops.

It wasn't the first such incident. In July 2008, Taliban fighters attacked a US outpost in the Afghan village of Wanat, killing nine American troops

Michael Crowley is a senior editor at *The New Republic*.

and wounding 27. Military investigators later discovered that a local police chief had helped carry out the attack. At his police post, they found a cache of more than 70 assault rifles that were probably US-supplied. The investigators picked up three more guns near the battle site itself.

## **The US military cannot account for at least 87,000 weapons supplied to Afghanistan.**

Pentagon officials say there's no way to know how the Taliban is getting these US weapons. They could be stolen or taken from dead US troops. They could even have been sold by US allies. (Private DynCorp contractors working for the United States have reported "multiple instances" of Afghan National Police personnel allegedly selling weapons to anti-American forces.) We just don't know, because the US has lost track of tens of thousands of weapons and ammunition in Afghanistan.

That's right. In January, the [US] Government Accountability Office found that the US military was not adequately tracking weapons supplied to Afghanistan's government security forces and in fact could not account for at least 87,000 of them, including machine guns and grenade launchers. Nor did the military keep reliable records for another 135,000

weapons supplied by NATO and other allies.

The missing weapons are just one part of a larger story: the sad saga of how America's high-stakes battle against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been hindered by incompetence, corruption, and

double-dealing. It's not just guns and ammo the US lost track of—it's US money too.

Since 9/11, the United States has poured about \$33 billion in aid into Afghanistan. Yet

it's widely assumed that President Hamid Karzai's American-backed government is rife with corruption. In discussions with everyone from American military leaders to provincial authorities, complaints about corruption "come up just about everywhere I have visited," says retired Major General Arnold Fields, whom the Pentagon last year appointed Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. Near the top of the list of complaints: Some Afghan officials, many of whom collect official salaries of less than \$20 per day, live in suspiciously posh new homes. Kabul's police chief owns a mansion, which, with its fountain and ornate Greek columns, reportedly rents for \$11,000 per month.

Is this money being looted from American funds? Who knows?

The chicanery may be worse next door, in Pakistan. America has sent

about \$12 billion since 9/11 to help Pakistan crack down on Al Qaeda operatives camped out along its border. Much of that, too, “has been stolen,” says California congressman Howard Berman. Pakistan artificially inflated prices by up to 30 percent for supplies like fuel, ammunition, and barbed wire. It has also diverted hundreds of millions to pay for weapons unrelated to its fight with the insurgents. And scarily, even as American officials warn about the risk of insurgents stealing a bomb from Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program, the country is still expanding its atomic arsenal, possibly with money freed up by American aid.

Worst of all, many US government officials and analysts believe Islam-

abad deliberately keeps the Taliban and Al Qaeda strong so it can milk the US for more aid. Pakistan’s intelligence service “is hedging its bets and playing both sides of the fence,” says a Senate Democratic foreign policy aide who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Policymakers may finally be waking up to these problems. The Pentagon has deployed a database that tracks the serial numbers and distribution of small arms sent to Afghanistan. But there’s still no tracking system for the ammo.

Across the border, the US has to get tougher too. President Obama should threaten to hold up future aid to Pakistan if it doesn’t put an end to its double-dealing.

## LAST TEXT MESSAGES

**The dangers of driving** while texting get all the news. But texting while doing pretty much anything else can also be hazardous, as these messages prove.

- I’m driving 140 kmph along the most scenic part of the cliffside drive! This should be nice: Here comes a bend in the road with no guardrail to ruin the view!
- I’m relaxing in a bathtub while texting you. I don’t have to worry about my battery dying because my phone is plugged into the wall outlet—
- Guess what! I’m being airlifted off a log, out of a river filled with piranha. I should be holding on to this rope, but I couldn’t wait to tell you about it!



*Greg Grabianski*



BY JOAN PAGE MCKENNA

**1. tantalize**—A: to push to the brink. B: tease with the unobtainable. C: reveal embarrassing details.

**2. lily-livered**—A: pale and sickly. B: cowardly. C: fun-loving.

**3. glob**—A: outcast from society. B: ancient form of measurement. C: lump of something soft.

**4. illegible**—A: married.  
B: indescribable.  
C: unreadable.

**5. natty**—A: obviously  
anxious. B: unevenly  
distributed. C: neatly  
attired.

**6. delectable**—A: frail. B: tasty. C: ornate.

**7. dawdle**—A: to stroll idly. B: confuse greatly. C: tangle tightly.

**8. silhouette**—A: dark shadow. B: high-heeled shoe. C: uncommon trait.

**9. literal**—A: careless writing. B: well-read student. C: exact interpretation.

**10. tally**—A: to tabulate. B: shout. C: flee.

**11. ululate**—A: to ripple softly. B: howl loudly. C: chew noisily.

**12. totter**—A: to walk unsteadily.  
B: drink heavily.  
C: sleep soundly.

**13. doodle**—A: to wait in line. B: skip in place. C: squiggle mindlessly.

**14. philately**—the practice of collecting  
A: stamps. B: girlfriends.  
C: books.

**15. telltale**—something that A: reveals a secret. B: pulses rhythmically. C: inspires greed.

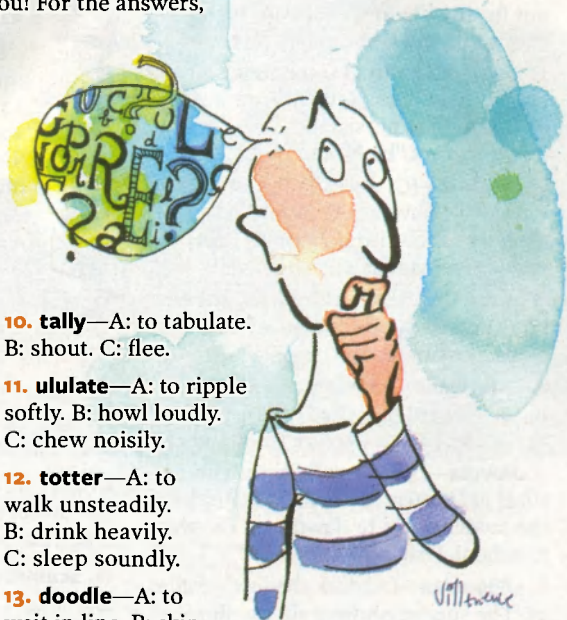
**16. knoll**—A: brass  
doorstop. B: rotting  
branch. C: small hill.

**17. toil**—A: to massage slowly. B: labour long. C: dismiss outright.

**18. scallywag**—A: nasty gossip. B: ne'er-do-well rascal. C: weather-worn sailor.

**19. loll**—A: to lie lazily.  
B: slobber while eating.  
C: soothe gently.

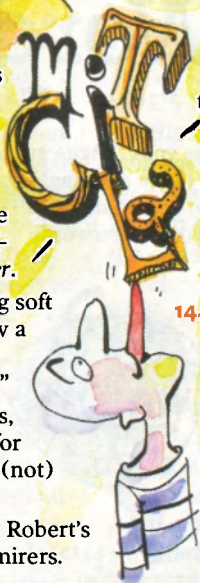
**20. ditty**—A: small boat.  
B: duplicated item.  
C: short song.





# Answers

1. **tantalize**—[B] to tease with the unobtainable; as, Cupcakes *tantalized* us from the bakery window. Greek *Tantalus*, a mythological king.
2. **lily-livered**—[B] cowardly; as, Changing-room mirrors are not for the *lily-livered*. Latin *lilium* (lily) and Old English *lifer*.
3. **glob**—[C] lump of something soft or semi-liquid; as, Xavier threw a *glob* of mud at his sister. Possibly from “blob” and “gob.”
4. **illegible**—[C] unreadable; as, Physicians have a reputation for *illegible* handwriting. Latin *il-* (not) and *legere* (to read).
5. **natty**—[C] neatly attired; as, Robert's *natty* appearance attracted admirers. Slang, possibly from “neat.”
6. **delectable**—[B] tasty; as, Megan looks forward to a slice of *delectable* apple pie. Latin *delectare* (to delight).
7. **dawdle**—[A] to stroll idly, waste time; as, Professor Smalley reminded the students not to *dawdle* on the way to school. Origin unknown.
8. **silhouette**—[A] dark shadow, profile; as, The sunrise showed off the lions' majestic *silhouettes* against the sky. From French author and politician Etienne de Silhouette.
9. **literal**—[C] exact interpretation, especially in writing; as, Scholars prefer *literal* translations of documents. Latin *littera* (letter).
10. **tally**—[A] to tabulate, register; as, Clerks hurried to *tally* the election votes. Latin *talea* (to compare).
11. **ululate**—[B] to howl loudly; as, The sound of women *ululating* in the distance pierced the quiet night. Latin *ululare* (to howl). Of imitative origin.



12. **totter**—[A] to walk unsteadily; as, The elderly man *tottered* down the street. Middle Dutch *touteren* (to swing).
13. **doodle**—[C] to squiggle mindlessly; as, Ken *doodled* in his notebook throughout class. Low German *dudelkopf* ~ (foolish person).
14. **philately**—[A] the practice of collecting stamps; as, *Philately* was a rewarding hobby for Nick. Greek *philos* (dear) and *ateleia* (payment exemption).
15. **telltale**—[A] something that reveals a secret; as, Rosine's *telltale* twitch tipped off her fellow poker players. Old English *tellan* (to tell) and *talū* (tale).
16. **knoll**—[C] small hill; as, Flowers sprouted from *knolls* around the countryside. Old Norse *knollr* (hilltop).
17. **toil**—[B] to labour long and with effort; as, Farmers *toil* in the fields at harvest-time. Anglo-French *toiler* (to dispute).
18. **scallywag**—[B] ne'er-do-well rascal; as, Lydia thought Teddy a *scallywag* for cancelling their date. Origin unknown.
19. **loll**—[A] to lie lazily; as, Mufari and Lake *loll*ed about on their dog beds. Middle English, likely of imitative origin.
20. **ditty**—[C] short song; as, Toby hummed his favourite *ditty* while bicycling. Old French *dite* (composition).

## VOCABULARY RATINGS

10-14 fair 15-17 good 18-20 excellent



For more vocabulary-building fun,  
go to [rd-india.com](http://rd-india.com)



## The Many Miracles of Patsy Li

BY MARTIN ABRAMSON

Facts can be stranger than fiction—like this World War II saga of a lost child

**O**n the morning of February 13, 1942, the S.S.V. *Kuala* steamed south across the Malacca Strait, her decks crowded with people fleeing from Singapore, which was about to fall to the Japanese. Silently the passengers watched and waited: they knew they were not yet out of danger. Other evacuation ships out of Singapore had been sunk by Japanese dive bombers. Then they heard it—





the drone of oncoming planes! Ruth Li, a well-to-do young Chinese woman, clasped her year-old baby, Lottie, to her breast and held six-year-old Patsy by the hand. Within seconds, bombs turned the *Kuala* into an inferno. Fighter planes roared over, strafing the decks with machine-gun bullets.

Caught up in a crush of screaming women and children, Ruth Li was jammed against the rail. She helped

Patsy onto a swaying rope ladder and then started down herself, clutching her baby. But as they neared the bottom, she heard Patsy scream. The over-loaded lifeboat had pulled away without them.

A piece of wreckage floated past the listing hull. Ruth told Patsy to swim over, grab it and hang on, tight. Her own hold on the rope ladder was weakening now, as the frightened people above kept crowding down



upon her. Another explosion shook the ship. Struck by an avalanche of falling bodies, Ruth Li went under water. When she surfaced, her baby was gone. And Patsy Li was nowhere in sight.

After a while a lifeboat loomed up and strong hands hauled Ruth Li aboard. "Wait!" she pleaded. "My babies are out there somewhere." But the boat pulled steadily away, out of the perilous waters where soon everything would be sucked under by the sinking ship.

That same day the lifeboat was beached on a small, uninhabited island, and a week later the castaways were rescued and taken to a little village in Sumatra. Ruth Li decided to return to Singapore. "My baby is lost," she said, "but I am certain Patsy Li is still alive. I must go home and wait for her."

The risks were great, but Ruth Li managed to cross the Strait of Malacca by sampan and slip back into Singapore. Her home and possessions destroyed, she became just one of the faceless people among the occupied city's anonymous millions—a woman old beyond her years, plagued by insomnia and chronic depression. At the war's end in 1945 she saw other families reunited, children returning from distant orphanages and sanctuaries. But Patsy did not return. Ruth had only her spark of faith that, somewhere, her daughter was still alive.

Then, early in 1946, she received a letter from her sister, Katherine, in

New York City. With the letter was a clipping from the *New York Times*. Since the sisters had been unable to communicate during the war, Katherine knew nothing of the *Kuala* tragedy; the *Times* story seemed to her merely a curious coincidence of names. It told of a little Chinese girl named Patsy Li, who had been picked up by US soldiers during the battle on Guadalcanal in November 1942. She had been cared for by a chaplain, Father Frederic Gehring, who later placed her in an orphanage run by French nuns on the island of Efate, in the New Hebrides.

As Ruth read the clipping, her eyes blurred. At once she wrote a letter to be forwarded to Father Gehring through the US Navy. "This child is my Patsy," she exulted. "How she ever reached Guadalcanal, 6700 kilometres away, doesn't matter. I just know she is my child." When the letter reached Father Gehring, aboard a troop ship in the Pacific, the husky, blue-eyed priest uttered a prayer. "Merciful Father, help me! How can I tell this poor woman that the girl cannot possibly be her child?"

His letter to Ruth told the story of "his" Patsy Li. One night during a lull in the fighting on Guadalcanal several natives had approached a US outpost, carrying a little Chinese girl. The child had been found in a ditch outside a village whose inhabitants had been killed by the Japanese because of suspected collaboration with US troops. The

child's head was horribly gashed and her body was afire with malarial fever. An American doctor did what he could, and left her in the chaplain's care. For days she hovered close to death, while Father Gehring kept a prayerful vigil. Then the crisis passed; the fever subsided and her wounds began to heal.

She tagged after "Father Freddy" everywhere—a sad-eyed, silent child who never smiled. Father Freddy, a former missionary in central China, called her Pao Pei, meaning "Little Treasure." At first she wouldn't speak a word, and didn't seem to understand the Mandarin dialect Father Freddy spoke. But there were times when he felt certain that she

understood some English.

One night a Marine had said, "Padre, we ought to give this kid an English name." So Father Freddy changed Pao Pei to Patsy, then added: "And for a last name, let's call her Li. Li was my name in China before the war."

Father Gehring felt that Patsy Li should not stay in the combat zone, so at the first opportunity he arranged to have her flown to the orphanage on Efate. When he kissed the little girl good-bye, she kicked and screamed and clung tight to his legs. The heartbreaking scene was witnessed by Foster Hailey, a war correspondent, who sent the story to the *Times*. >>



Thus, Father Gehring concluded his letter, the child had been named only by chance. He was deeply sorry that the coincidence had raised false hopes in a mother's heart.

But Ruth Li's faith was unshaken. "This is my Patsy Li," she declared, and started making arrangements to visit the orphanage on Efate.

The meeting between Ruth and "Patsy Li" took place towards the end of 1946, in the residency of the assistant commissioner on Efate. When the child was brought in, Ruth Li rushed towards her with open arms. But then her heart sank. The dull-eyed, sullen-faced child shied away from her. And she bore no resemblance to the beautiful little girl Ruth had lost four years earlier.

When the child left, Ruth Li's spirit cracked. Bernard Blackwell, the commissioner, tried to console her. "Don't be hasty," he urged. "Stay awhile and get to know the child better. You must be absolutely certain before you leave."

Next day, when the sisters brought Patsy to the residency for another visit, Blackwell called Ruth's attention to the vaccination mark on the child's left arm. "That means she wasn't born on Guadalcanal or on any of these islands," he said. "We don't have smallpox here, or smallpox vaccination."

"My Patsy was vaccinated when she was eight weeks old," Ruth said, "and in exactly that spot." She recalled a scar left by a sty on her

daughter's eyelid. Sure enough, this Patsy Li's eyelid bore the telltale scar! Then one of the nuns mentioned a birthmark on the girl's right thigh, and Ruth's hopes plummeted; her baby had been born without a blemish.

But the French doctor who had treated Patsy said emphatically, "That is not a birthmark. It is a powder burn." Ruth wasn't fully convinced. Also, she kept hoping that the child would somehow remember her.

The doctor urged her to be patient. "This child has suffered much, enough to transform her appearance and block her childhood memories. We must give her time, madam—perhaps a long time."

For several days Ruth wrestled with her doubts, while Patsy remained stiff and cold, showing no signs of recognition. To make things easier for the child, Ruth arranged for some playmates to come with her from the orphanage for her daily visit. She drew some comfort from the fact that Patsy remained withdrawn even from them.

Then Ruth had an inspiration. She had with her a precious memento: a postcard Patsy had written to her aunt in 1941, while she was learning to write English. She had always printed in big block letters that had one distinctive fault—the Es were reversed.

Ruth seated the children around a big table and gave them pencils and paper. "Now," she said. "let's try to

write some letters. First, Patsy Li will write these words in English: Dear... Aunt... Katherine..."

With each word she breathed a silent prayer.

Obediently, laboriously, Patsy Li set the message down on paper. When she finished she looked up with a puzzled frown. Ruth stared at the paper: the words were in block letters—with every E reversed!

DEAR AUNT KATHERINE  
WE ARE ALL WELL.  
HOW ARE YOU? I LOVE  
YOU. PATSY

That night Patsy remained at the residency with Ruth. Long after the child was asleep Ruth lay awake beside her, aware of every little movement, occasionally reaching over to touch her face or hair. Towards dawn Patsy turned and, mumbling in her sleep, placed an arm around her mother's neck. The last shred of doubt vanished from Ruth's mind. Exhausted but happy, she closed her eyes and went to sleep.

An expert later certified that both specimens of handwriting had been done by the same hand. Then, when the story of Patsy's identity was published, missing pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place. A survivor of the *Kuala* wrote that he had seen a child of Patsy's description picked up by a lifeboat. Another survivor declared she had later been taken aboard a freighter bound for Guadalcanal. >>

The story of Patsy Li does not end there. She returned to Singapore with her mother. Slowly, in familiar surroundings, her own personality unfolded and earlier memories came back. She talked long and affectionately of her priestly guardians and began writing to Father Gehring. The priest's warm replies gave Ruth an idea. In 1949, when Patsy was 13, her mother wrote: "Father, I would like Patsy to study medicine and finish her education in America. Would you help her?"

Father Gehring, out of uniform and serving as director of the Vincentian Missions in Philadelphia, was only delighted to make the arrangements. He passed the word to his old armed forces friends, and soon received cheques, money orders, savings bonds. On Christmas Day 1950 Patsy Li arrived in the United States, and entered a girls' school in Williamsburg.

Years later, when Patsy Li of Singapore marched proudly across the campus of Catholic University in Washington, carrying the diploma that awarded her the degree of Bachelor of Science, awaiting her

under the broad shade trees were two people who were prouder still—Father Freddy Gehring and Ruth Li, who had recently arrived in America and planned to stay.

"No child alive has been so blessed as my Patsy," said Ruth Li. "No mother has been more fortunate than I. God in His wisdom has seen fit to bestow on us many miracles."

*We first published this article in 1959. Settling in the US, Patsy Li became an industrial nurse noted for her skills and the deep interest she took in accident victims and employees with health problems. After her first husband passed away, she remarried and is now Mrs Patsy Li Fasano. Father Gehring, who wrote a 1962 book "A Child of Miracles" and kept in touch with Patsy, died in 1998.*



*You can get this collector's edition filled with similar RD classics. The special 144-page 55th Anniversary issue, priced at Rs75, may be ordered by writing to us or via [rd-india.com](http://rd-india.com).*

## TRY A TATTOO

**My fiance is not** a sentimental guy, so I was pleasantly surprised when he asked a jeweller to engrave the inside of our wedding rings with our names and wedding date.

"That's sweet," I gushed.

"Sweet has nothing to do with it," he said. "I just don't want to forget our anniversary next year."

Anita Toh

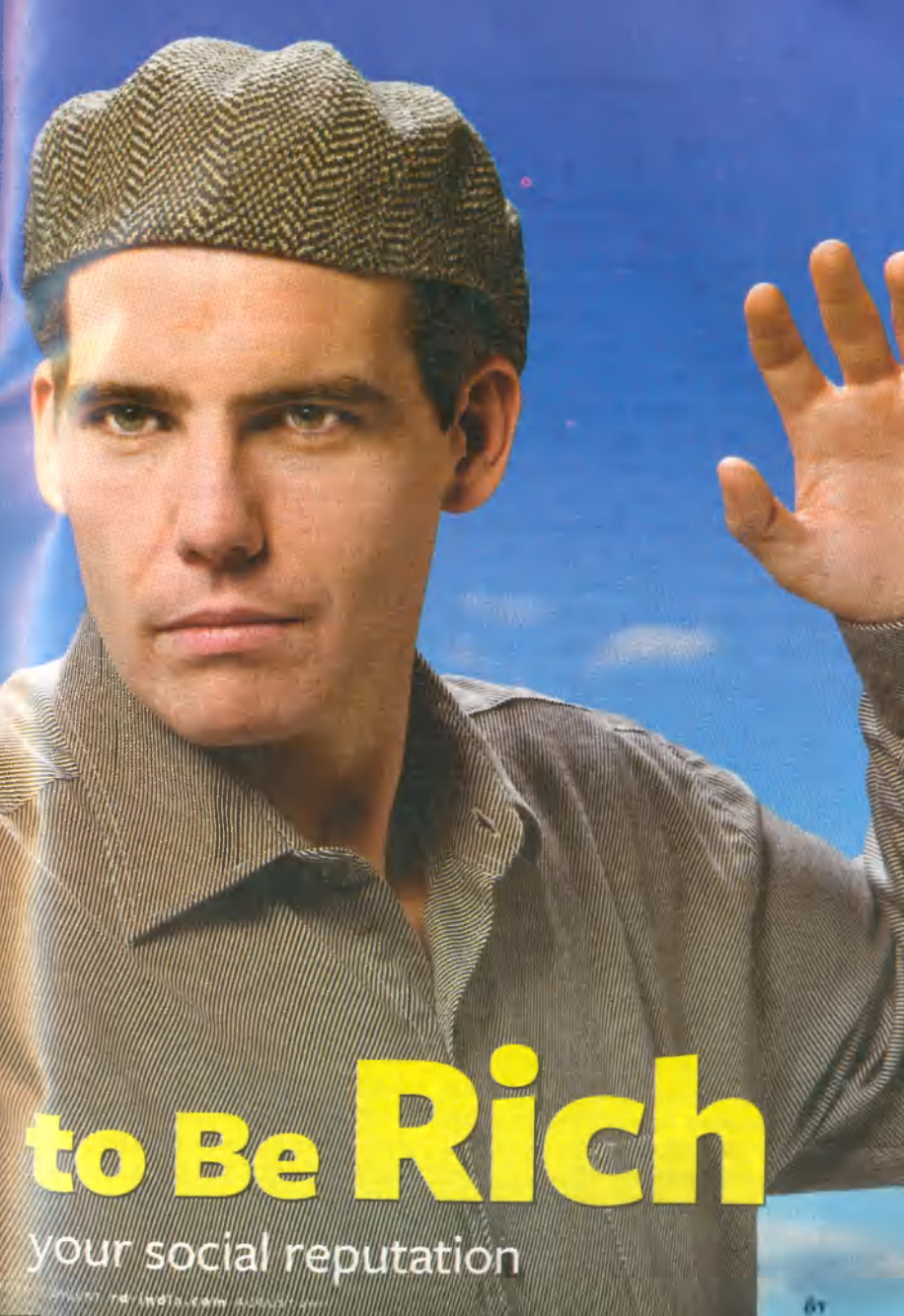




BY JON EVANS

# We're All Going

But money won't matter as much as



# to Be Rich

your social reputation

[www.fox.com](http://www.fox.com) AUGUST 2011

**Imagine a game designed to change** the world by connecting strangers and building reputations. Does that sound cute but trivial? Don't be fooled. This is a wholly pragmatic endeavour, and for Montreal, Canada-based entrepreneur Austin Hill, his game, Akoha, is anything but irrelevant. It is an innovative prototype of a truly inclusive "reputation economy."

Reputation economies are not new, but may need some explaining. The overall esteem in which people are held by those around them—call it "social capital"—has always been critically important to humans. People rich in social capital can rely on personal connections to get what they want, often without spending a dime. But the value of a person's social reputation has always been vague, implicit and unmeasurable; hard to gain and easily lost; worthless to anyone more distant than a friend of a friend. Unless, of course, you are a celebrity and your reputation is universal.

It took Hill to ask, "What if everyone's reputation was universal?" What if, given a stranger's e-mail address or phone number or Facebook page, you could immediately determine the general esteem in which that person was held, measured in, say, karma points. What if people with lots of karma points—good Samaritans, in other words—were feted, sponsored, given gifts, invited to the best parties, asked to join exclusive communities? What if having lots of these points was even better than having lots of money?

**But how could a whole society built** around karma points complement, or even replace, the money economy we live in today? Because we're all going to be rich. During the 20th century, despite its countless tragedies, the overall wealth of the world increased almost 40-fold. In the long run, that growth is likely to continue. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that, despite global warming, the Gross World Product in 2100 will be between ten and 26 times larger than it was in 2001. And the average person in the developed world will be several times wealthier than today's average American.

But that doesn't mean we'll all be happy. Even in a world of abundance, not everyone will be able to go to the finest schools, attend the best parties or be world class at what they love. The things that matter most—meaning, purpose, community, love—might be harder than ever to find. And studies show that once you attain a certain level of wealth, more money will not make you happier.

This is where a person's reputation comes in. In this world of future abundance, it will be social capital, not money, that will matter most.

Hill, who owned million-dollar Internet companies by his mid-20s, has learnt this lesson first-hand, and he's ready to make you a believer, too. Like most entrepreneurs, he is passionate and convincing. On stage, during his frequent speaking engagements, he is confident, funny and dynamic; but in person, there are hints of an intro-



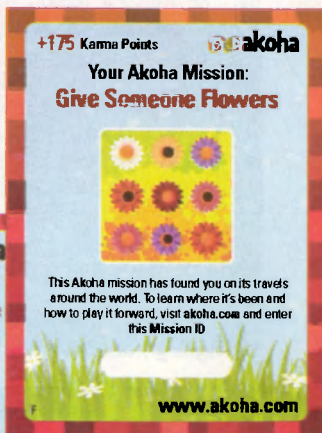
vert's wariness behind his public mask. After giving a speech, he slips outside for a quick cigarette. "My only vice," he admits sheepishly.

**Aside from some prematurely grey hair,** Hill looks younger than his 36 years. It's still easy to see the precocious teenager who, in 1989, turned his high school upside down. Hill unearthed a flaw in the school's computer system that made it possible for anyone to edit the report card of any student in the school. Picture that scene: an appalled principal with a thunderous expression facing the student who had pointed out this potential breach in security. Most would be intimidated. Not Hill. When asked how much he would charge to solve the problem, Hill calmly answered, "Four hundred dollars an hour." Two weeks and one bug fix later, 17-year-old Hill was \$20,000 wealthier, and just getting started.

The following year he stood before the assembled Board of Education and told them their entire staff needed his data-security training. But why would they need training? Their systems were locked down tight by passwords. The answer, Hill explained, was social engineering. Passwords were useless if the staff hadn't been taught how to

keep them secret. To prove it, he offered to call up any employee and find out that person's password over the phone. They named the chief of their recently computerized payroll system, a strict, by-the-book woman. Hill called her, pretended to be from technical support and wheedled her password out of her while the entire school board listened on speakerphone. They hired him on the spot to train all 15,000 teachers in the system. Another \$50,000—and he was still just getting started.

**Hill never graduated from the high school that had paid him so handsomely.** Instead, he dropped out to become an entrepreneur. "When I was a teenager, I made easy money from good marketing," he says. "I've learnt that for me to be proud,



**Examples of Akoha mission cards, given to the recipients of good deeds so they can play them forward.**

# The Easiest Change You Can Make



**Even with a regular Indian diet, you can prevent heart problems, fight cancer and increase life expectancy**

The secret ingredient: **olive oil**



Olive Oil is universally accepted as a miracle food. Poets have sung about it, doctors have raved about it and chefs cannot do without it.

The whole world has switched to Olive Oil for its daily cooking. Why not us?

Because, for some reason, no one took the trouble to educate us! No one told us that there are different grades of Olive Oil for different uses. No one explained to us how exactly Olive Oil's unique properties benefit our health. So, we continue to believe in myths that convinced us Olive Oil wasn't the right oil for Indian homes. It is high time someone busted those myths!

**Myth 1: Olive Oil can't be used for Indian cooking.**

**Fact: Yes, it can! Especially if you use the right grade: Olive Pomace Oil.**

We tend to pick up Extra Virgin Olive Oil from the shelves because we've heard it's the best oil. Best flavour, sure, but not best for cooking Indian cuisine! When we tried to cook Indian cuisine with Extra Virgin, we found that the taste changed! Frying in Extra Virgin also presented difficulties.

No one told us that Extra Virgin is a

somewhat heavy and viscous oil, when compared to other grades of Olive Oil, and is best suited for raw use in dressings, dips and flavourings.

In fact, it's the humble Olive Pomace Oil that is the cooking grade oil. Pomace oil is used all over Italy, Spain and the Mediterranean for every type of cooking. It is a light oil with neutral taste and flavour. Olive Pomace Oil can be used for all methods, types and varieties of Indian cooking; it neither changes the taste nor presents any difficulties while cooking. Indian cuisine, whether fried, roasted, 'bhunoed' or cooked by any other method, tastes as good with Olive Pomace Oil as with the usual refined oil in your kitchen.



**Myth 2: Olive Oil should not be heated and is thus not suitable for frying.**

**Fact: Olive Pomace Oil is one of the best oils for high-heat cooking and frying!**

It's true that Extra Virgin Olive Oil has a low smoking point. Many of its antioxidants are lost when it is heated. The best use of Extra



Virgin is raw, when the full benefits of its flavour and health attributes can be experienced.

Olive Pomace Oil, however, has a smoking point of 238 degrees C, one of the highest amongst culinary oils. Its benefits are especially apparent when frying at between 130 and 238 degrees C. At these temperatures, olive oil forms a crisp, golden crust, making the fried food much more appetizing but without affecting its nutritional value. During the process, the oil hardly penetrates the food, leaving it light and digestible.

What's more, Olive Pomace Oil may be re-used 3-4 times as long as it is filtered carefully after each use through gauze, muslin or a suitable paper filter.

**Myth 3: Olive Oil is too expensive.**

**Fact: No, it isn't, if you use the right grade and use it correctly!**

Your doctor may tell you that you can't put a price tag on good health but the one you see on olive oil sure pinches!

Don't be misled by the price tag because, even though Olive Oil costs more than other edible oils, it is economical to use since it is used in 1/3rd the quantity of other edible oils. Since Olive Oil has a high smoking point, it can also be reused 3-4 times.

Used in 1/3rd the quantity and reusable 3 times, the effective cost of Olive Oil is 1/9th its actual price!

Moreover, make sure you use the right grade of Olive Oil for the right purpose. Olive Pomace Oil is the lowest priced Olive Oil - as low as half the price of Extra Virgin -

and provides optimum value for money as the best cooking grade oil for Indian cuisine.

**And then, there is the greatest FACT of all: Olive Oil is the World's Healthiest Cooking Oil. Prevent Heart Problems, Increase Life Expectancy!**

With low saturated "bad" fats and the highest content of mono unsaturated "good" fats amongst all oils, Olive Oil reduces LDL or bad cholesterol and helps prevent heart disease and diabetes. Olive Oil is also packed with anti-oxidants that fight against cancer, reduce the effect of aging and increase life expectancy significantly.

Making olive oil a part of your daily cooking can bring instant and easy wellness to your family's diet.



Leonardo Olive Oil is available at all leading retailers or order online for free home delivery on [www.dalmiaglobal.com](http://www.dalmiaglobal.com)

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Olive Oil



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I have to create meaning.”

Of course, that's easier to say when you already have two high-profile megadollar companies under your belt. The first, Total.net, he launched at the wise old age of 21, along with his brother Hammett. Three years later, it was the third largest Internet service provider in Canada, and they sold it for \$8 million. In 1997 they co-founded another start-up, Zero-Knowledge Systems, with a vision of enabling private and unbreakably secure Internet communications for everyone. It was a heady time—until 2001's dot-com crash. “I was like a missionary who got ahead of the church,” Hill reminisces bleakly, “and got burned at the stake.” The money dried up and he had to rethink his brainchild.

We are social creatures, and the respect, esteem and friendship of others is very important to us.

At the time it seemed like utter failure, but that doesn't sound so bad to Hill. “Failure is just the price of admission,” he says of being an entrepreneur. But it wasn't that setback that almost ruined Hill—and in fact, Zero-Knowledge Systems evolved into Radialpoint, one of Canada's fastest-growing software companies. Nor was it burnout; Hill thrives on the intense, gruelling challenge of building a new company from scratch. (His first vacation in years was last August, when he got engaged in Greece and celebrated at

the annual Burning Man community-building festival in Nevada.)

What nearly destroyed him was the death, by cancer, of his 20-year-old brother, Morgan. “I was totally lost,” Hill recalls of the period around Morgan's death. “Drinking too much, using alcohol as a crutch, I was drowning and looking for someone to throw me a life jacket.” Then, only weeks after his brother's passing, while still lost in grief, Hill attended the annual TED—Technology, Education and Design—conference in California: a legendary invitation-only event where billionaire CEOs and Nobel laureates rub shoulders with media mavens, maverick inventors and avant-garde artists. He arrived with a plan to found a cancer charity

in Morgan's name, but the startling optimism and excitement at TED opened his mind. He soon realized he wanted to honour his

brother's life, not his disease.

**From this came the birth of Akoha,** a social-reality game where you earn karma points by “playing” real-world missions such as “Give Someone a Book,” “Support a Public School,” or “Donate an Hour of Your Time.” Trading gifts for reputation is what powers most user-generated-content websites such as YouTube; it's how most personal social networks function, albeit in a local, invisible and unquantifiable way; and it's exactly how Akoha works. The genius of Akoha is that it is a

reputation economy designed to reach out to people who are not yet part of it. In other words, it is built to be infectious. And that means that it just might go viral.

The product is still in “open beta,” meaning the system is being tweaked as data and feedback are received from the thousands of users. The goal is to make it as easy as possible for players to have fun and do good. It’s a tricky business, though. It seems the current card system breaks subtle social rules. Users report that after they do something good for someone else, giving a “mission card” to the recipient feels wrong and somehow invalidates the act. That awkwardness is a barrier to participation, limiting the number of people who will want to take part.

The Akoha brain trust wants to lower all such barriers. They want to ensure that good ideas and new missions bubble up from users, so that as the game grows, its community determines its direction. They want anyone and everyone to want to “play it forward,” to quote their motto, so that mission recipients will be intrigued enough to start playing themselves. Only if Akoha ultimately goes viral, if its growth rate erupts

and the active community grows into the millions, will the company and its players’ karma points become important. Otherwise, they will remain an interesting curiosity and Akoha will wither away.

And of course, timing is everything. Blogging didn’t take off until nearly a decade after it began. Facebook is the heir to long-forgotten Tribe.net and Friendster. Is Akoha, too, a decade ahead of its time? We won’t know until months after it is officially launched.

**Whether or not Akoha succeeds,** whether Hill’s brainchild becomes a phenomenon or merely a forerunner of one aspect of the future economy, few would dispute that Hill has honoured his late brother’s memory in an extraordinary way. One that just might change the world.

**Humorist Tom Wilson** puts failure in perspective. “About the only time losing is more fun than winning is when you’re fighting temptation.”

+100 Karma Points

**akoha**

**Your Akoha Mission:  
Make Someone Smile**



This Akoha mission has found you on its travels around the world. To learn where it's been and how to play it forward, visit [akoha.com](http://akoha.com) and enter this Mission ID:

\_\_\_\_\_

[www.akoha.com](http://www.akoha.com)

+150 Karma Points

**akoha**

**Your Akoha Mission:  
Give Someone a Surprise Gift**



This Akoha mission has found you on its travels around the world. To learn where it's been and how to play it forward, visit [akoha.com](http://akoha.com) and enter this Mission ID:

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[www.akoha.com](http://www.akoha.com)

# Get Those Goals Right

## And you'll save taxes too!

BY GAURAV MASHRUWALA  
CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER

**My 45-year-old client** was full of beans as he returned from his club, where a guest speaker had given a talk on the health benefits of jogging. My client—I'll call him Sharma—was well-to-do, but he'd neglected his health. Today he'd finally seen the light.

Up early the next day, Sharma set out to run. By the time he returned home exhausted, he'd done over three kilometres! His heart raced, and he felt giddy, unfit and achy. That day the man who'd walked to become healthier stayed at home—he was sick.

What Sharma experienced with sudden physical exercise is what most people do with fiscal exercises by the end of March, when the financial year (FY) draws to a close.

Every year, by that time, my office gets calls from another of my clients, an employed lady who asks, "Can you please send me application forms for

my tax-saving investments? Tomorrow is the last day, after which they'll deduct a huge amount in taxes!"

Why do most people invest in tax-saving instruments only in March? Because they magically become richer in that month? And do most Indians die just after March?

From the behaviour of the large majority, the answer to these questions would seem to be yes, because that's the only time when an overwhelming majority of people make tax-saving investments and buy life insurance.

But think again.

If you're one of them, then saving tax is clearly your first priority—not the investment you make that should boost your net worth, or the life insurance you take that should protect your family. Poor financial literacy!

Such knee-jerk investing practices do not help us save money appropri-





← INCOME TAX OFFICE

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TUE 31 3  
WED M 4  
THU A

ately. You must aim, instead, at pursuing tax-saving investments slowly and in a systematic manner over the entire FY, and not scramble in at the last moment.

So let's get it right. There are three things to consider: Your financial goals, investment strategy, and the choice of tax-saving transactions.

All three are important. You must try and align them, if you want to maximize your savings and optimize taxes. There's my cycle-rickshaw analogy. The rickshaw's front wheel gives direction to the vehicle—achieving your financial goals. Although the rickshawalla sits up front, his pedalling drives the two rear wheels, which represent investments and tax saving. To reach his destination, he has to pedal as well as give it front-end direction.

**Financial Goals.** Our financial goals comprise those responsibilities and aspirations for which we need to save and invest our hard-earned money. These include health, housing, children's education and marriage, travel, vehicles, hobbies, property, wealth targets, charity, retirement plans. Since I know that most people never take the trouble to list these, I make my clients do that important exercise. If it's a couple, the husband and the wife are given separate sheets of paper and asked to list their future financial responsibilities, wants and dreams. More often than not, their lists don't match, since they've never discussed those things before.

If that sounds just like you, do it

now—or else, you'll be earning and saving all your life, but without knowing or deciding what you're saving for.

**Investment strategy.** In the absence of financial goals, investors tend—dangerously—to focus on market conditions. If the stock market shoots up, you buy shares. When gold prices soar, you buy gold. So with property. Thus, over time, your approach to investment gets aligned to market conditions, and not to your own financial goals. You may not benefit much by following the herd.

**Choices for tax-saving.** When financial goals are not defined, your tax saving exercise will also not be in sync with your life goals. Since tax-saving transactions are often treated as a mandatory financial-year-end exercise, I've learnt that most people are not even aware of the actual tax benefits they derive from buying them all of a sudden.

**Tax laws are friendly.** They're so friendly in fact that you may happily invest or save primarily with your goals in mind.

Nobody enjoys paying income tax. But the broad philosophy is that citizens who earn enough must pay taxes honestly, because we use roads, parks and bridges—and the “best things in life that are free,” all of which we tend to take for granted. We enjoy the protection provided by our armed forces, the police and the courts, the services of so many people in public

life, all surviving on tax money. (If you find fault, imagine life without all these and you'll understand.)

I said tax laws are friendly because we are given benefits—subject to some limits in most cases—when we spend on practically all our major financial responsibilities. So it's wiser to give the responsibility priority, not the tax-saving part.

Take health and life insurance. As Sharma learnt at his club that day, good health is our biggest wealth. But most of us take it for granted. "We live a healthy life, exercise daily and eat natural food," another of my clients told me. "No one at home has been hospitalized. So why should I pay for health insurance?"

"You can never tell when—," I tried to explain.

"No, we don't need it," my client interrupted adamantly. Standard argument, I thought, and so I tried the tax bait, since there's a tax benefit on the health insurance premiums that you pay for yourself, your spouse, children and dependent parents.

"You have a choice," I said. "Either you pay a health insurance premium or pay tax." It worked—and my client's family got health cover. The tax benefit was secondary, as far as I was concerned.

The unfortunate death of a family's breadwinner means both emotional and financial loss. You'll have to deal with the emotional loss, but it helps immensely if life insurance taken by the deceased covered the financial loss. Premium paid towards life insur-

ance (ask for Term life insurance for the best cover at the lowest premiums) is also deductible from your taxable income.

Or take housing. There are tax deductions on the rent you pay, and on the interest and the repaid principal on housing loans.

Education too. Expense incurred as tuition fees on any two of your children is exempt from tax. So is interest paid on educational loans for studies beyond the 10th standard.

**Saving for retirement.** Will the wealth you create outlive you, or will you outlive your wealth? Since the wealth must outlive you, it's vital that you provide for your twilight years—and, with today's improved health care, those years could be long. There are schemes like the Employee Provident Fund, Public Provident Fund, equity-linked saving schemes (ELSS) of mutual funds, and insurance-linked long-term saving schemes. All these can also save you taxes.

Even after you retire and you put your savings in schemes that give you regular income—senior citizen saving schemes, annuities or monthly income plans—you continue to get tax benefits.

As I tell my clients, follow your life goals all year round—buy insurance, save in ELSS, send the kids to college, take a home loan if you need one, invest in FDs. Do whatever, keeping those goals in mind. Treat the tax you save on all these as a nice bonus, and not the other way around. ■



**O**n the way to a funeral, I travelled through some dense fog, and for safety's sake, put on my headlights.

When I returned to the car, it wouldn't start because I had forgotten to turn the headlights off while parking. I went back to the funeral home to ask for some help and was met at the door by the undertaker.

"My car is dead," I said.

"Sorry, lady," he replied. "We don't bury cars."

*Ruth Lieske*

**For my mother's** birthday, I gifted her a copy of Sal Severe's bestselling book "How to Behave So Your Children Will, Too!" She hit me over the head with it.

*Deven Kanai, Mumbai*

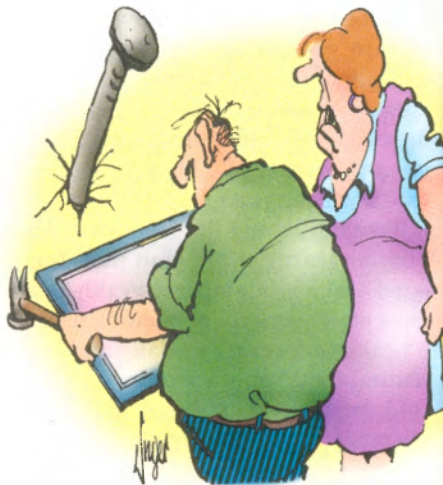
**One day**, when I noticed my husband squinting at the TV, I told him he'd better get his eyes checked. The next day, he came home with a bigger TV.

*Lori Byrne*

**Having parked** my car in front of a restaurant, I picked up two scratch-lottery tickets at a nearby store to play while I

**Natasha, my five-year-old niece, watched wide-eyed as her granny removed her dentures and washed them. Then Natasha asked, "Can you take out your tongue also?"**

*George N. Netto, Thattathimukku, Kerala*



*"Is that the only nail we had?"*

enjoyed my food. Each ticket was a winner, and I went back into the store to get two more tickets. This process was repeated four more times, until I had won \$16.

After dinner, I was happily walking back to my car when I noticed something on the windshield: a parking ticket for \$16.

*Keith Knelsen*

**After a frustrating morning** of getting our four children packed up and off to church, we were just sitting down when the pastor quoted a scripture that said children were a blessing, like a

quiver full of arrows.

"Yeah," my wife remarked,  
"Sometimes I just can't wait to shoot  
them."

*Thomas Zimmermann*

**After sailing across** the Atlantic, my family and I arrived in France. Wanting directions and sorely in need of conversation, my father stopped a passerby and asked if he spoke English. Sizing up my dishevelled father, the man warily responded, "Sometimes."

*Katherine Tucker*

**Following some hectic** shopping, my sister-in-law entered a teashop with three men at a table, sipping tea and talking away. Choosing a vacant table, she asked a man standing nearby for some tea. Obliging, he poured her some from a flask. After having the tea and resting awhile, she asked for the bill, but the man refused any money. "Madam, it is my pleasure," he said. "Please drop by whenever you come here." Puzzled, my sister-in-law came out and read the sign outside—only to discover that it was a property dealer's office.

*Satyen Dutta, Kolkata*

**Spotted outside** a church: "Honk if you love Jesus. Keep on texting while you drive if you want to meet him."

*Gina Vesely*

**My 88-year-old** mother once had to answer some questions from opposing lawyers in a case.

"Have you ever dealt with an attorney?" asked the plaintiff's lawyer.

"Yes. I had an attorney write my living trust," she responded.

"And how did that turn out?"

"I don't know," she said. "Ask me when I'm dead."

*Georgeana Pilcher*

**All parents** are proud of overachieving children, and one father was no exception. The bumper sticker on his car read "My Kid Made Your Licence Plate."

*Anthony Tobiasz*

**The doctor was** reviewing some results from a routine blood test with me during my check-up, and then he took my blood pressure.

"Were you in a hurry this morning?" he asked.

Contemplating the worst, I replied, "No, as a matter of fact, I sat quietly in the waiting room, very relaxed and reading. Is something wrong? Is my blood pressure off the scales?"

"No," replied the doctor, "You're wearing your T-shirt inside out."

*Elaine Kent*

**Some old phrases** must be acquiring new meanings. I was wearing sandals on a recent Saturday at the bank when a man dropped his umbrella squarely on my foot. He bent down, picked up the umbrella and looked at me. I thought he was going to say sorry. But he said, "No problem."

*Mohan Sivanand*

**Rs** Your anecdote in "Life" might be worth Rs1000. Post it to the Editorial address or e-mail: [editor.india@rd.com](mailto:editor.india@rd.com)

## Do You SMS at the Dinner Table?

**M**iss Manners says not to, but over half of all Indians polled do. Of the 16 countries in this poll, four, including India, had a majority of respondents answer yes to mealtime texting. As you might expect, a greater number of those under 45 give their thumbs a workout at the table. And of the text-happy Indians, there are more men (51%) than women (48%)—unlike most of the countries polled.

Mobile phones are not allowed at the table. That is sacred family time.

*Cyndi Cirillo Hove, 47,  
California*

An urgent SMS or two, I understand. But it's rude to text away incessantly at mealtime.

*Helina Desai, 33,  
Mumbai*

Yes, I text at the table. And Google. And Twitter. And surf. And eat.

*Phillip Lassner, 35,  
Canada*



For more on our  
Around the World  
survey, go to

[readersdigest.com/  
worldquestions](http://readersdigest.com/worldquestions).



More women than men admit to dinner-table texting in 11 of our surveyed countries. Only in **Canada, France, India, Malaysia,** and the **UK** did male texters outnumber females.



## Not at the table

Canada	85%
Germany	84
Netherlands	83
US	83
Spain	77
France	76
Australia	75
Italy	74
Brazil	73
UK	72
Russia	61
Mexico	51

**Brazil** was the only country in which respondents over age 45 do more dinnertime texting than younger people. Why? "Years ago, our government banned computer imports," says Sergio Charlab, editor of Reader's Digest Brazil. "Older residents remember the craving for technology and now try to catch up whenever they can."

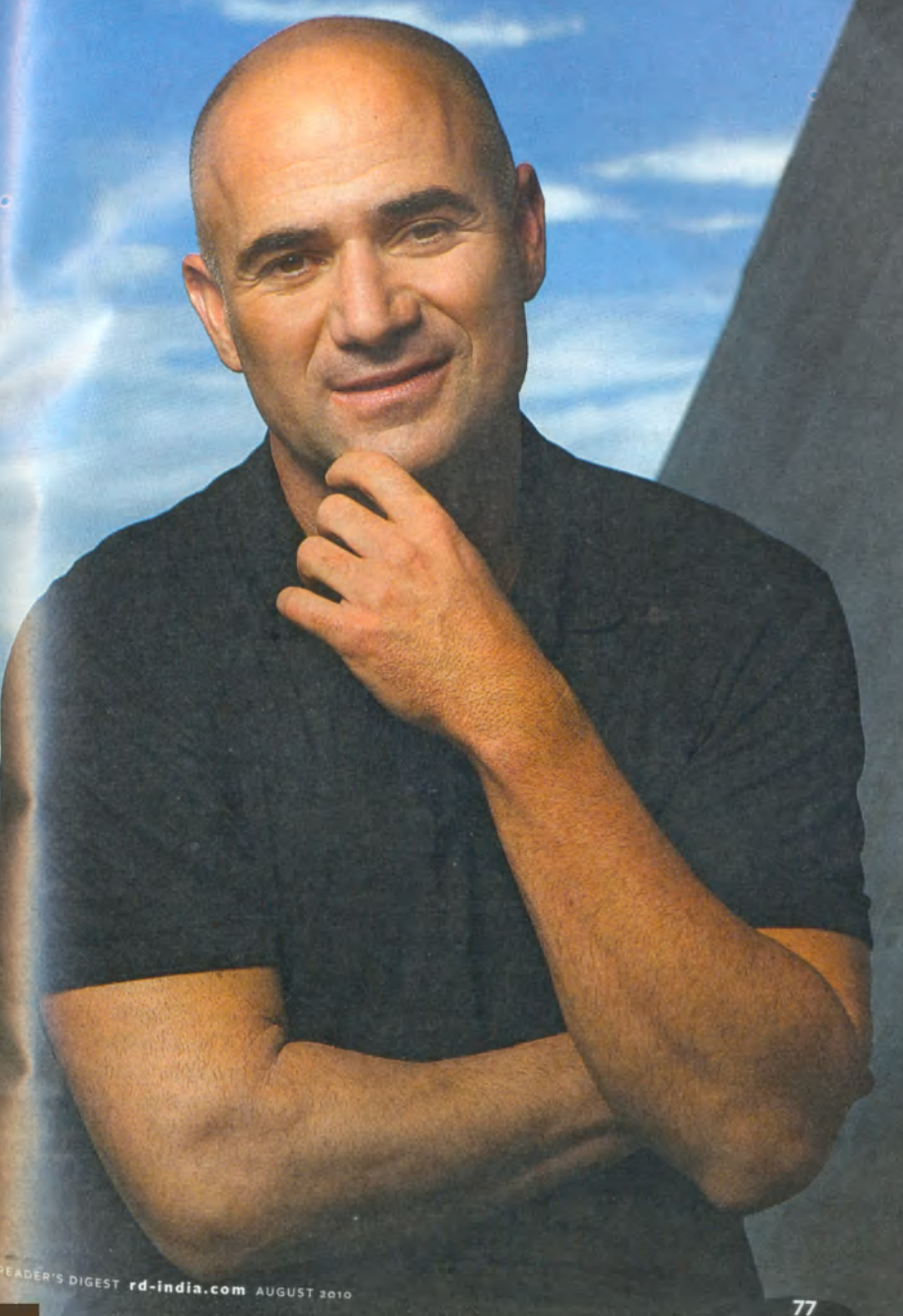
## Tennis icon Andre Agassi on

# Fathers & Sons

**A conversation with the tennis star about sports, his autobiography, being a father and a son**

BY CHRISTOPHER KEIL

American Andre Kirk Agassi, 40, is among the best tennis pros of all time, having contested his first professional match at age 16. He became one of just six players to have won each of the four Grand Slam tournaments (Australian, French and US opens and Wimbledon) at least once. He won 60 tournaments between 1986 and 2006 and was ranked world No. 1 for 101 weeks. Agassi earned over \$30 million in prize money. He has been a rebel and attracted attention in other ways as well, notably through his brief marriage to actress Brooke Shields. In 2001, he married German tennis player Steffi Graf. The couple live happily with their two children in Las Vegas, where Agassi grew up.





**Question:** *The world knows you as a tennis player. A few months ago you launched your autobiography, "Open," and indeed it is...*

**Andre Agassi:** As a tennis pro I always led a very public life, and much of what was publicized about me was simply wrong, both the good and the bad. I knew my way around the tennis court, but not the world outside. I never knew who I really was. How should others know? My life consisted of contradictions that I carried around inside me and that I could never explain.

**Q:** *Have you understood Andre Agassi since then?*

**Agassi:** I understand him differently every day and, like anybody else, I have to work for my inner peace every day.

**Q:** *Your father was a known taskmaster. How come you didn't deal with him more harshly in your book?*

**Agassi:** My father is unbelievably loyal. I wished he had loved me less. He was always big-hearted. He was just looking for the shortest way to the American dream...

**Q:** *... and that lay in your success.*

**Agassi:** My father had a plan, and he was so disciplined you wouldn't believe it. I don't know how he did it—two jobs, four children, standing on the tennis court with us hour after

hour, all this crazy discipline. He had many positive sides.

**Q:** *But the negatives dominated you for two decades.*

**Agassi:** I asked him once, "Daddy, how did you deal with the things people said about you, about how you handle things, with yourself, with us?" He said, "I don't give a damn what others say about me. If I had to start over, I would do everything exactly the same. With one exception: I wouldn't let you play tennis again, but would get you into golf or baseball. Both sports you could have played longer and so made more money."

**Q:** *Nice.*

**Agassi:** You have to understand him. Dad grew up as an Armenian Christian in Moslem-Islamic Iran. He had to fight a daily fight against the world. He had a mother who treated him badly, and even forced him to wear girls' clothes to school. He learnt very young not to trust anybody. Then when he came to the US he didn't speak a word of English, but he somehow slogged his way through school. This man never had a choice in his life; he wanted us children to have all the chances that he didn't have. The irony of it all was that he himself did not let us have a choice. He was so poor that success meant nothing to him if he couldn't earn any money with it. So having



## **With wife Steffi.** **Perfectionism is a big everyday ambition for the pair.**

really survive if he did not go to the toilet for two weeks. Believe me, we all have a good relationship with my father. To me, he is as he always was. He is constantly giving me advice. Once it was about tennis, now it is about raising kids, about what, in his opinion, I should do better as a father.

**Q:** *You have won all the important tournaments in your 20 years as a tennis pro, even an Olympic gold medal. You became the top-ranked player in the world. And now you claim in your book that you hated playing tennis.*

**Agassi:** To understand me, you have to be able to imagine the pressure under which I lived even as a little boy. The atmosphere in our house always depended upon whether I trained well or badly, whether I won or lost. The stakes eventually got higher, they were about a lot of money, and our income increased, but nothing changed in our way of acting as a family. Losing meant that things were bad for the rest of the family, because my father did not accept defeat under any circumstances. At the age of four I already learnt that there were quarrels between Dad and my older siblings when they lost. When I watched them play games I was constantly afraid of them losing. They did not win often enough, and

a chance meant just one thing for him: money.

**Q:** *You have two children by German tennis player Steffi Graf. How is your father doing as a grandfather?*

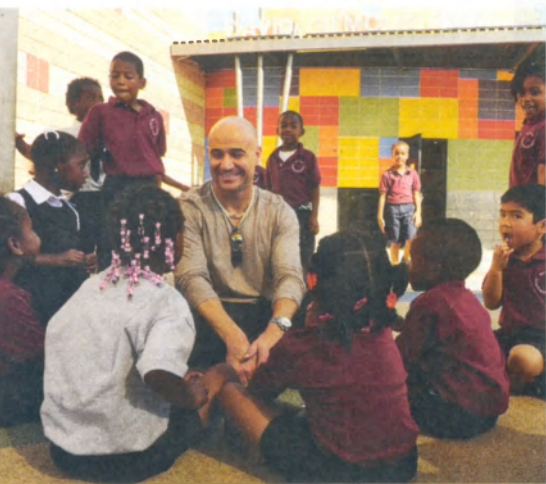
**Agassi:** He is okay. Anyway, he always speaks his mind.

**Q:** *So what does he say?*

**Agassi:** My son was playing tennis with him once and hit a ball straight to his body. My father looked at him and said, "If you do that once again I'll step on your rear end so hard that you won't be able to go to the toilet for two weeks."

**Q:** *And your son came crying into the house?*

**Agassi:** Not a single tear, he just wanted to know if a person could



I was the last hope. I had talent, I won, but I hated everything connected with it.

**Q:** *At 13 you went to Florida, to Nick Bollettieri's tennis camp, far away from your father. Did the separation make things easier?*

**Agassi:** I didn't want to go to camp. I was scared out of my skin. It was more like a punishment camp, sheer horror. And the worst of it was 4800 kilometres separated school and home. The other kids could see their parents on the weekend, I couldn't. I began to rebel, and suddenly I was rebelling on a global stage.

**Q:** *But a teenager who hates tennis would sooner let everything slip.*

**Agassi:** You have to look at it this way: I am like an artist who refuses to go on performing when it hurts. I did not at that time accept tennis

as a lifestyle. But all of a sudden tennis did provide a chance to make life somewhat more bearable. Trips with my brother, money, supper in good restaurants. But it was like jumping from the fire into the frying pan. The pain was just a little more bearable.

**Q:** *In "Open", you tell us that at some point you decided to play only for yourself. When was that?*

**Agassi:** In 1997, when I was 27. I was so bad at the time, number 141 in the world rankings, that I had to accept a wild card in

order to participate in a tournament in Stuttgart, Germany. Brad Gilbert, who was my coach then, couldn't put up with my declining status any longer. He told me and the team to come to his hotel room and said, "We're not leaving here until you have made a decision. Either you stop, or we start all over again." I thought, "Hold on, you've never liked tennis and never less than at this moment." I didn't like myself, I didn't like what I had achieved.

**Q:** *You had already achieved so much by then. You no longer had to work.*

**Agassi:** Precisely. I said to myself, "You can stop right now. You have everything you need: money, a wife, and finally you have your freedom. It doesn't get better."

**Q:** *Exactly.*

**Agassi:** But then I asked myself:



"How would it be if I were the only one to decide who I want to be as a tennis player?" The key question was: Is there any reason why I keep on playing? I had no answer at first, but then I founded my school...

**Q:** ... the Andre Agassi Foundation, which trains and supports children from difficult social environments.

**Agassi:** In this school I could observe how a life changed, and indeed changed for the better. From then on I played for my school. I said to myself, "Tennis goes on being hard, tough for the head, but you're playing for something that lasts, that's more important than your own needs."

**Q:** And you just got more successful in the second phase of your career.

**Agassi:** That's exactly right. I'm a living contradiction.

**Q:** How are you educating your kids?

**Agassi:** I am not a teacher, but I try to teach my own and the other children in my school to be sympathetic. We want to show them what it means to love those closest to you. Education, including character-building, means a huge expansion of possibilities.

**Q:** Are you as a father more lenient than your own father was?

**Agassi:** I am demanding, you can be sure of that. I have clear ideas about how our children have to behave and how they should approach life. I hope that they take on responsi-

bility, for themselves, and for others.

**Q:** When do you become strict?

**Agassi:** If my son does not listen, if he hurts somebody or does not behave properly, that makes me angry, very angry sometimes. I say: "Pay attention, or else..." If he then comes to me later, if he has learnt his lesson or accepted punishment, we get along again in a completely normal way. He has to understand why I had to have a word with him. But he must not be afraid of any lasting emotional punishments. I demand a lot, but I also forgive a lot.

**Q:** Your children are already financially secure for life. How do you want to teach them that people have to work hard for their goals?

**Agassi:** They do not see us as parents provided with everything and living luxuriously. They can see every day how much energy and devotion I put into my school. My son talks to his friends about it, he says: "My Dad has a school for kids who don't have so much."

**Q:** Your wife, Steffi, was feared as a tennis player for her perfectionism. You too were always looking for the perfect strokes. Can perfection be an everyday ambition?

**Agassi:** A big one, a very big one, which we both have. This won't change in me. When I decide on something, it has to be perfect, it doesn't matter whether it's in the kitchen, for the family, or in my business. ■

# Quotes

If you want a guarantee, buy a toaster.

Clint Eastwood

Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.

Malcolm Forbes

**It is our responsibilities, not ourselves, that we should take seriously.**

Peter Ustinov

Business is a dog-eat-dog world, and government is just the opposite.

Michael Bloomberg

The measure of achievement is not winning awards. It's doing something that you appreciate, something you believe is worthwhile. I think of my strawberry soufflé. I did that at least 28 times before I finally conquered it.

Julia Child

I really don't think I need buns of steel. I'd be happy with buns of cinnamon.

Ellen DeGeneres

Of the billionaires I have known, money just brings out the basic traits in them. If they were jerks before they had money, they are simply jerks with a billion dollars.

Warren Buffett

My grandfather once told me that there are two kinds of people: those who work and those who take the credit. He told me to try to be in the first group, there was less competition there.

Indira Gandhi

It's the ones you can call up at 4am that matter.

Marlene Dietrich

**Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't.**

Erica Jong

Marriage is not merely sharing one's fettuccine, but sharing the burden of finding the fettuccine restaurant in the first place.

Calvin Trillin

Talent is only a starting point.

Irving Berlin

How blessed are some people, whose lives have no fears, no dreads, to whom sleep is a blessing that comes nightly, and brings nothing but sweet dreams.

Bram Stoker



# Off Base

HUMOUR IN UNIFORM

**W**hile learning about jumping out of aeroplanes in an emergency, my son-in-law's classmate asked the instructor: "We only get one parachute? Where's our reserve?"

"Son, you're a pilot. You're supposed to land the plane," came the answer. "That means the parachute is your reserve."

*Barbara Graydon*

**A US army major** is walking into the headquarters building when he sees a soldier leaning against the wall, his shirt hanging out.

"You! Tuck that shirt in!" the higher-ranking man shouts. "What's your name, soldier?"

"John, sir," the soldier replies.

"You will address me as major. And I don't address lower ranks by their first names. What's your last name?"

"Darling," the soldier replies.

"My name is John Darling, Major."

"All right, John, let's talk about that shirt."

*Dan Germain*

**As he trained** troops, my brother-in-law noticed that one medic was hopeless on the firing range, and told her she had better learn how to fire her weapon. "All soldiers have to qualify on the range before we can send them to Iraq," he told her.

The relieved medic said, "Then



*How about if I just follow you on Twitter instead?*

it's okay. "I'm not going to Iraq. I'm going to Baghdad." *Robert Sprackland*

**While on manoeuvres**, we came upon a stranded heavy vehicle under the command of a lieutenant. The officer was gone, but his driver told us the engine failed. We took a look and determined they'd run out of fuel.

"Where's the lieutenant?" I asked.

The driver responded, "He drove off to get help in the fuel truck that was following us."

*Carl Courville*

**Rs** Your favourite new joke or one-liner might be worth Rs350-1000. Send it to us at the Editorial address.



# TRACKING DOWN JAMES BOND

Where in the Alps would the world's most glamorous secret agent hang out? Why, the world's most glamorous resorts, of course

BY JAY COWAN

**The scene remains** one of the most famous opening sequences in film—ever. James Bond wakes up in a mountain cabin, in bed with a beautiful woman, receives a phone call, dresses quickly and skis off. He's immediately pursued down the slopes and, at one point, spins backwards to fend off attackers with a ski-pole rocket gun as he's racing down the mountain. The helicopter camera pans back wide on Bond as he straight-lines for a cliff. Then he launches.

Bond flies off the cliff, releasing his skis into the abyss. Then he falls. And falls. Finally he deploys his chute—there's a big Union Jack across it. Freeze frame and cue the Bond music.



It's 1977. The film is *The Spy Who Loved Me*. BASE jumping is still in its infancy. Nobody does it better—and it isn't a special effect.


In the film's opening at the summit, Bond's double is the stunt-skier Ed Lincoln being chased down glaciers above Pontresina, Switzerland. Then Rick Sylvester takes over, ripping down the slopes into the open on Canada's Baffin Island as the camera shot widens. A skilled alpinist and stunt skier, Sylvester skis off the 1000-metre-high rock and gets as far as possible away from the cliff before he pulls cords to release his skis and chute.

As a skier I was totally wowed. The same way I'd been when I started reading the James Bond novels 10 years earlier. The man knows how to live. And Sylvester's real-life jump was as mind-blowing as any of Bond's antics. It foreshadowed a new era of extreme sports and confirmed that skiing was still sexy, fashionable and exhilarating. Why else would they keep putting ski sequences in the Bond movies?

Bond is an English hero, created by the very English Ian Fleming and adapted for the screen by an English company. The Bond film *oeuvre* is filled with dashing ski scenes, which reflects Europeans' traditional love of both the sport and the *beau monde*.

**I figured if anyone** could have a good time skiing, it was James Bond. So I set off to retrace the ski tracks of the world's most famous secret agent. For both of us, it started in Mürren,

FROM SKI, NOVEMBER 2008 © JAY COWAN



*The Spy Who  
Loved Me* (1977)



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Nobody does it better than James Bond, or more precisely stuntman Rick Sylvester, who skis off a 1000m cliff and parachutes to safety—introducing BASE jumping to the world. Above right, Roger Moore as 007, with Barbara Bach as the Bond Girl.





***On Her Majesty's  
Secret Service* (1969)**



George Lazenby's Bond had a stunning backdrop—Alps and a bevy of beauties—in his escape from Blofeld's mountain-top hideout, Piz Gloria. It is now a restaurant with sweeping views of the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau (above).



Switzerland, where the 1969 movie *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (OHMSS) was filmed. Mürren doesn't let you forget about Bond. At nearly 3000 metres in the Alps, on top of a ragged and windswept summit called the Schilthorn, the Piz Gloria "James Bond" revolving restaurant commands sweeping views that include the famous trinity of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau.

**In 1968**, producers were looking for a location to film OHMSS. They found a lift company in Mürren that needed to complete a cable car to the top of the Schilthorn and a restaurant. The film company helped with the financing in return for the right to be the first to use the complex, which took on the name of Piz Gloria, Fleming's moniker for Blofeld's mountaintop hideout. As kitschy as it is—spinning around in a sky-high café eating "James Bond spaghetti"—it's also a stunning location for anything: a movie, lunch, sightseeing and, especially, skiing.

The revolving restaurant housed a bevy of beauties in the film, along with then-unknown Telly Savalas as Ernst Stavro Blofeld, Bond's arch-enemy. The souvenir shop sells pins, patches, coffee mugs, caps, lighters and watches with James Bond logos. Downstairs is a hallway decorated with large stills from the movie. And outside is the viewing deck where the helicopters landed in the film.

**When Bond**, played by George Lazenby, escapes from Blofeld he drops from

the tramway terminal onto the summit run at Mürren. Thus begins a frenzied tour of the spectacular Mürren slopes, as well as the Lauterbrunnen Valley, one of the most beautiful waterfall-and-glacier-studded box canyons on Earth. In the movie, several bad guys plummet off the 760-metre cliffs into the valley. In the real world, people pay to do that in tandem paragliders. Or they just ski, a big, rangy experience that can cover more than 2000 vertical metres when the snow is right.

Even today, with its high-tech lifts and vehicle-free design, Mürren has a retro buzz. The valley feels as if it hasn't been fully discovered, underscored by trappings from skiing's golden age: cable cars rising up icy cliffs, chic people, villages with horse-drawn sleighs and church steeples. I even spot a vintage Aston Martin DB5 (found in *Goldfinger*) that could have been waiting for Bond to jump in.

**I load my gear** into a car and cruise along the serpentine mountain roads of the Jungfrau region and up to Interlaken's five-star Grand Victoria-Jungfrau Hotel, the perfect Bond lay-over. An elegant casino is next door and the hotel and spa are among the finest in the Alps, ideal for meeting a Bond man, such as Stefan Zürcher. He was born and still lives in nearby Wengen and has worked on more than 40 films—nine of them Bond flicks—including the latest, *Quantum of Solace*. Zürcher started his career as a stunt actor in OHMSS when he was 23.

"When you're young you don't think



about getting hurt," he says. "I worked on that film for five months. They completely remade the bobsled run for it. We blasted off a whole cornice to create a real avalanche. It was huge." He grins. "Then for close-ups we built ramps and dumped snow off them and had people tumbling."

Zürcher also worked with the famed cinematographer and fashion designer Willy Bogner Jr in Switzerland for *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977) and *A View to a Kill* (1985). In typical movie protocol, Switzerland stood in for Austria in *The Spy* and Siberia in *A View*.

**In *A View to a Kill***, Moore's doubles are the six-time champion freestyle skier John Eaves and the snowboarding pioneer Tom Sims. In one scene, Eaves is down to a single ski when he commandeers a moving snowmobile by jumping on it, kicking off his ski in the process. Zürcher was driving the snowmobile, which blows up just as Eaves jumps off. Then Sims takes over as Bond, grabbing the remnant of one of the snowmobile's metal ski tips and riding it away like a snowboard. It was only 1985, but snowboarding had made its major movie debut.

In between *A View* and *The Spy Who Loved Me*, Bogner and Zürcher worked on *For Your Eyes Only*'s 35-minute ski sequence in 1981, the second-longest in Bond history, behind *OHMSS*. While the skiing in *OHMSS* was based on the novel, it was completely invented by the filmmakers for *Eyes*, offering an exciting tour of Cortina, Italy, which is where I head next.



Not only does Bond have cool gadgets, his stunt doubles in *A View to a Kill* are champion freestyle skier John Eaves and snowboarding pioneer Tom Sims, whose scene (right) was snowboarding's motion-picture debut.



**"The snow this year** is better in Innsbruck," a fellow spy says to Bond on top of Cortina's signature Tofana ski mountain. "But not in St Moritz," replies Bond.

After being briefed, he begins what, even for Bond, is a long day in the mountains. It involves the beautiful daughter of an Italian gangster, a lovely ice-skater, Cortina's Olympic ice stadium, a chase featuring motor-cycles with wickedly studded tyres and an East German biathlete who keeps shooting at Bond during a competition instead of his targets. And all before lunch.

The Cortina backdrop is busy and glamorous. A former Winter Olympics host (1956), Cortina is perched in the

## A View to a Kill (1985)



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heart of the Ampezzo Dolomites.

The village is compelling, with architecture that pays tribute to its Mediterranean heritage—lots of pastel stuccos and iron railings. It is so bursting with elegant dining, beautiful people, fast cars—it seems that even when the cameras aren't rolling, they should be. A popular, if frenzied, tour will introduce you to all five of Cortina's exceptional ski areas in the same day. That's the way Bond's day feels in *For Your Eyes Only* as he flees down Cortina's 90-metre ski jump, fighting two villains on the way.

After that scene, Bond is chased again by the fiendish motorcyclists, forcing Eaves to jump onto and off a restaurant deck before ending up on

a bobsled track—another famous stunt. Still on skis, Eaves is bracketed by a bobsled in front and motorbikes behind as he races down the ribbon of ice before bailing and escaping. "I trained in the St Moritz bob run over Christmas in 1980," Eaves says. "Being laid out horizontally on an ice wall at 95 kmph, held there by the force of gravity, almost defies the laws of nature."

The Olympic bobsled run is still used for competitions. You can pay for a ride, piloted by drivers who treat your two-minute run as a personal challenge to scare any good sense out of you.

**While *Quantum* was filming,** word spread that Daniel Craig was taking



This film, starring Roger Moore with professional figure-skater Lynn-Holly Johnson was shot in Cortina. It's hair-raising chase scene, incorporates shooting, motorcycles and a precipitous descent down the bobsled run.



ski lessons and that Marc Forster, the Swiss director, wanted to shoot in his home country and include a lot of ski scenes. Sadly it was not to be.

No worries. Inevitably, there will be more Bond films that feature the glamour and danger of sliding down a mountain. Even though Fleming's novels only put Bond on the slopes once, in *OHMSS*, skiing stunts and exotic mountain resorts have become part of the Bond lexicon. When M debriefs

Bond near the end of that novel, he says, "Well, you were pretty lucky to get out of that one, James. Didn't know you could ski."

"I only just managed to stay upright sir," James answers with typical Bondian aplomb. "Wouldn't like to try it again."

*According to news reports, work on the next Bond film has been suspended indefinitely.*

## EAU DE MUTT

**I was leaving** the groomer's with my dog when I noticed a pet perfume in a display case. It's a wonder that we don't bowl each other over trying to get it, because the tagline boldly announced, "Strong enough for a man ... but made for a Chihuahua."

*Becky Kelley*



# Fund-raising Wunderkind

Since age four, Bilaal Rajan has worked to ease the suffering of children worldwide. Now, at the ripe old age of 13, he's more involved than ever

BY CHRISTINE  
LANGLOIS

**Bilaal Rajan** is a pint-sized marvel. The 13-year-old Canadian, whose ancestors were Indian, has raised millions of dollars for children's causes and attracted worldwide media attention—most recently when he walked barefoot for an entire week in solidarity with poor children around the globe.

But like most 13-year-olds, he can't stop wriggling. It's understandable: After a long day spent patiently answering questions from the media, he's





**During the 2005 Halloween festival, UNICEF ambassador Bilaal meets then Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin.**

was four. It started with a photo of "utter destruction" on the front page of a newspaper his parents were reading. The earthquake in Bhuj, Gujarat, had killed thousands. Even at that young age, Bilaal could imagine the suffering of children left without parents. At the time, he was eating an orange and decided he would sell the oranges to raise money to help earthquake victims. For several weeks that winter, he and one of his parents or grandparents went door-to-door selling the fruits, raising \$332, which the family donated to UNICEF.

Bilaal's mom, Shamim, and his father, Aman, barely gave a thought to the donation. "It was just what we did," says Shamim. As Ismaili Muslims and followers of the Aga Khan, they already put a major emphasis on philanthropy in family life.

But even the most generous of souls rarely raises \$5 million at such a young age, as Bilaal has done. When he was eight, he sold cookies supplied by his father's food-service business to help Haitians affected by a hurricane and victims of the 2004 tsunami. Then he sold acrylic plates he made from a craft kit to raise \$1100 for HIV/AIDS orphans in Africa. And every year, he participates in the World Partnership Walk, an initiative of the Aga Khan Foundation Canada, a nonprofit agency that supports social

anxious to go biking in the nearby park with his friend Sam.

Why, I ask him, does he give so much of his time to helping others? He sits up straight and makes eye contact. The fidgety boy disappears. "It's simply one thing: Giving is the greatest reward. That's how it feels to me. I've never felt better than when I make a difference." His point made, he lolls back again, swinging his feet over the arm of the chair.

Bilaal first learnt the value of helping other children when he

development programs in Asia and Africa. Bilaal has even started his own foundation, called Hands for Help. In 2007, he was chosen as one of Canada's two child representatives for UNICEF.

Bilaal's latest idea—the barefoot challenge, launched in April 2009 catapulted him onto the international stage. For a week, Bilaal went barefoot everywhere: to school, the mall, speaking engagements in Toronto, to the park, and he challenged other children to do the same so they could experience what poor children endure every day.

His belief that his example would focus attention on child poverty was spot-on. First, Toronto media reported that Bilaal was going without shoes to voluntary events. Then the story went international, with Bilaal doing over 50 interviews with reporters in more than a dozen countries. In each interview, he touched on his key messages: that children in poverty deserve help and that everyone, by following his or her passion, can make a positive change in the world.

Kids around the world took up the challenge. Bilaal heard from participants in Australia, Switzerland, Afghanistan, England, Thailand, Malawi, Sweden and the United States,

to name a few. One teen in Costa Rica got her whole school involved. Bilaal hopes that this will become an annual event.

Shamim devotes long hours to her son's philanthropy as booking agent and chauffeur. "My schedule revolves around him," she says.

On the day we met at their home, Shamim had already made a 300-kilometre round trip to a school in another city so that Bilaal could speak to students about the barefoot challenge. After Bilaal explained why he was going barefoot, head of school David Thompson removed his own shoes—and encouraged students and staff to do the same for the rest of the week.

Bilaal's next move is promoting his book, *Making Change: Tips from an Underage Overachiever*. He also recently partnered with Adil Lalani, a web entrepreneur in his 20s, to launch a sudoku website for kids. The site—[sudokuhub.com](http://sudokuhub.com)—raises funds through advertising, with 100 percent of revenue going to the UN's World Food Program.

Bilaal continues to visit places where he can learn from children living in poverty. "There's one sentence in my head," he says. "Poverty should not happen because someone is born into a different family."

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**Punctuation, I told** my students, is the key to good writing. So I'm praying that this sign, from a local restaurant, wasn't written by one of them: "Eat Smart Kids."

David Strand



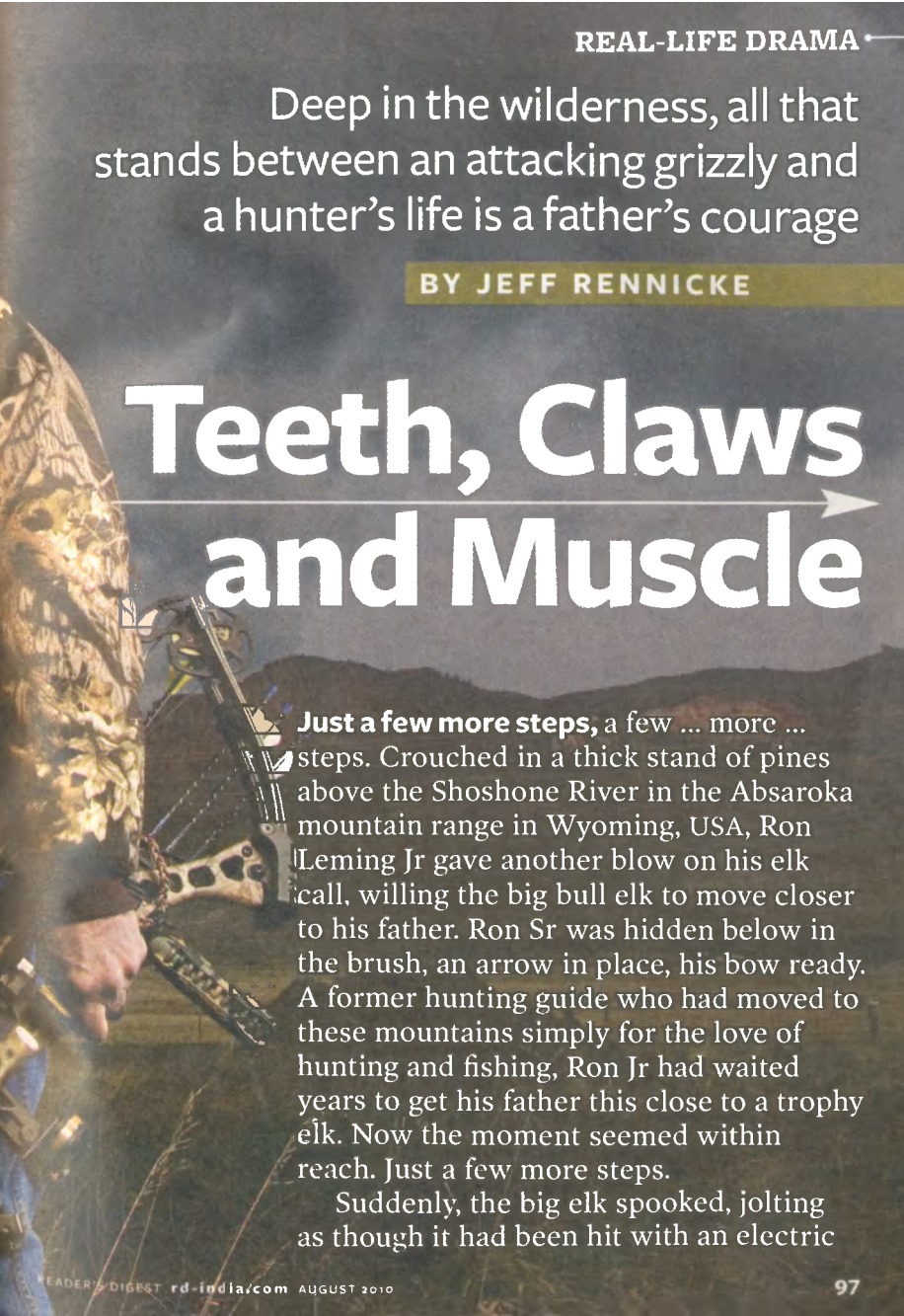


**Father-son bond:**  
Ron Leming Jr and  
his dad, Ron Sr near  
their home.

Deep in the wilderness, all that stands between an attacking grizzly and a hunter's life is a father's courage

BY JEFF RENNICKE

# Teeth, Claws and Muscle



**Just a few more steps,** a few ... more ... steps. Crouched in a thick stand of pines above the Shoshone River in the Absaroka mountain range in Wyoming, USA, Ron Leming Jr gave another blow on his elk call, willing the big bull elk to move closer to his father. Ron Sr was hidden below in the brush, an arrow in place, his bow ready. A former hunting guide who had moved to these mountains simply for the love of hunting and fishing, Ron Jr had waited years to get his father this close to a trophy elk. Now the moment seemed within reach. Just a few more steps.

Suddenly, the big elk spooked, jolting as though it had been hit with an electric

current; it veered off into the timber and was gone. *That's weird*, Ron Jr thought, disappointed. *There's no way that elk caught our scent. What could make a bull spook like that?* He stood up to get a better view, turned around, and found himself staring straight into the eyes of the answer.

**Both father and son** love the land that rises above the riverbanks in this corner of Shoshone National Forest: pine-robed peaks reaching some 3000 metres, thick woods punctuated with lush meadows, rocky basins dotted with mountain lakes, and all of it stitched together with heart-shaped elk tracks, wolf howls, and the sudden flash in the rocks that might be a cougar. Accessible only by pack-horse—a rough, 24-kilometre ride up Boulder Basin—it's true wilderness, some of the wildest land in America. It's also grizzly bear country.

Once nearly driven to extinction, the grizzly has rebounded here; the region's population is now estimated at 600. But it wasn't bears that the Lemings were looking for on their week-long hunting trip last September. It was elk. "My father and I do a bow-hunting trip for elk just about every year," says Ron Jr. It's a special time for a son who grew up hunting with his father, who also grew up hunting with *his* father—the hunt a thread that binds the men together. They camp in the same spot each year and sit around the fire until long after dark, sharing coffee, laughs, and stories of the mountains they cherish. "We're very close," says Ron Sr

"These trips mean everything to me."

Perhaps this trip meant even more. On the last day of their hunt the year before, Ron Sr was tossing his saddle on a horse when he heard something pop in his elbow. A tendon had snapped, leaving the elder Leming barely able to move his right arm, much less shoot a bow accurately. Arm surgery followed by a lengthy rehab and a lot of target practice had him feeling confident again, but this trip was the real test. "My dad has never had the experience of getting a big bull elk with a bow," says Ron Jr, who has taken several trophy elk himself. "I really wanted him to have that." Twice on this trip, he'd been within range, but both times, his arrow missed the mark.

"It was frustrating," Ron Sr says. "I got to wondering if maybe I was too old." This time, this day, he hoped, would be different. As he rode out of camp that morning, he said a silent prayer in the half-light of a mountain sunrise: "God, guide my arrow today." It was a hunter's prayer, whispered in humility. "I would never pray to kill something," the father says. "I just wanted to know I could still shoot well if I got the chance." Within hours, that prayer would be answered in a way he never could have imagined.

**The two men were** hunting in a place they call the Rock. "It's one of our favourite areas," Ron Jr says—a long rim of cliffs with scattered stands of trees. "We always see elk in there, and this time we had a plan." Dressed in full camouflage and wearing elk scent



to help cover his human scent, Ron Jr stood about 35 metres uphill from his father and began mimicking a bugling elk with his handheld elk call—a wavering, high-pitched note that echoed through the mountains. For 30 minutes he called. Then a response: A big elk appeared from the timber below and moved towards Ron Sr.

The bull came within 65 metres, just out of bow range but then stopped and turned to rake a tree with its antlers. Ron Jr kept calling, waiting, not moving, hoping it would turn and come

his best to sound and smell like an elk, the bear probably thought it was stalking a bull, says Bruscano. “When it saw the movement of the hunter standing up, it just acted on instinct.” And its instinct was to attack.

The bear—a dark-brown, 250-kilo avalanche of teeth, claws, and muscle—reached Ron Jr in seconds. With no firearm or bear spray, he had only his bow to protect himself. “I had an arrow ready, and my first thought was to shoot,” he says, “but there was no time.” He dodged the first charge,

Ron Jr stood uphill and began blowing on his elk call. Then, from the timber below, a big elk appeared and moved towards Ron Sr.

within range. That’s when he heard something rustling behind him in the bushes: another elk, a small bull that had smelled him and run away. But the big bull stayed, moving even closer to the 25 to 35 metres Ron Sr needed for a clean shot.

“Everything looked good: The wind was right in our faces. The elk had no idea we were there,” Ron Jr says. “I was sure Dad was going to get a shot.” But that shot never came. The bull elk ran. Ron Jr stood up, turned around, and locked eyes with a bear.

“**Adult male grizzlies** rarely attack humans,” says Mark Bruscano, the warden who would later investigate the incident. “But they can be very predatory towards elk.” With Ron Jr doing

jumping behind a tree and gaining a few steps on the bear, then took off running downhill towards his father.

“I heard Ronnie yell, ‘Hey, get outta here!’ and from the tone of his voice, I knew instantly that it was a bear,” says Ron Sr. When he looked up, he saw his son running for his life, a few steps ahead of the attacking grizzly, and both of them coming his way. “My first thought was, *That bear’s going to maul my son.*”

There was no time to think or be scared; there was only a father’s instinct. “For just an instant, he was a baby back in my arms, and I just knew I couldn’t let this happen,” says Ron Sr. Forgetting the danger, the injury to his arm, and the frustration of missing so many easy shots earlier in the trip,

Ron Leming Sr stood his ground, pulled back on his bow, aimed, and took the shot.

"I saw an arrow zip right past my leg," Ron Jr says. But he didn't have a chance to turn and see where it landed. In seconds, the bear was on top of him. Ron Jr rolled on his back and tried using his arms to protect his face, the bear biting into his arm and crushing his elbow in the vise of its jaws. "The force of its bite was just tremendous," Ron Jr says, "and he was tossing me all around. But there was no pain at all." In the fury of it, he was thrown back on his feet. He ran for a split in a tree, hoping to get between the trunks, but in seconds, the bear was on him again, biting his hand and back.

"I turned to get another arrow," says Ron Sr, "but when I looked back, all I could see was the bear on top of Ronnie. I had to do something." Using his compound bow like a club, Ron Sr

hit him pretty well with the first shot."

In fact, the single arrow from Ron Sr's bow had severed a blood vessel near the animal's heart. In a creature that even a high-powered rifle sometimes can't stop with four or five shots, it was a one-in-a-million shot for an archer. The grizzly staggered a few more steps, fell over, and didn't move again. The arrow had flown true.

**"That's when the trees** and everything started getting blurry," Ron Jr recalls. He was going into shock. "There was so much blood," Ron Sr says, "but we couldn't tell how much of it was the bear's and how much was from Ronnie." Checking for wounds, they found deep bites on Ron Jr's hand and arm, a few cuts and scratches, but miraculously no major injuries. Most of the blood was from the bear. Still, Ron Jr was shaken. His father built a fire and thought about getting his son to safety 25 kilometres

**"I saw an arrow zip right past my leg,"**

**Ron Jr says. But he didn't see where it**

**landed. In seconds, the bear was on top of him.**

charged up to the marauding bear and pummelled its back and head with the flimsy weapon until the bear released his son. The bear turned and lurched down the hill, away from both men.

"Ronnie yelled for me to shoot him again, but I didn't want to make him madder than he already was, so I just watched him," the father says. "From the way he was stumbling, I knew I'd

down a rugged mountain trail and then to a hospital another 50 kilometres away.

Their cell phones were out of range. No one would come looking for them for days. The only option was to go out on horseback. But with his injuries, Ron Jr couldn't mount his horse. "It was ironic," he says. "Since last year, I've had to help my dad get on his horse because of his arm injury, and here he



**Ron Jr with wife Bridgett, daughter Jessie, six, son Casey, four, and dog Ellie. Inset: claws from the grizzly.**



was helping me get up on mine.”

They managed the mount and set off. Much of the six-hour journey is fuzzy in their memories. During the long ride out, Ron Jr thought about his love for hunting: its risks and its rewards. “I don’t blame the bear,” he says. “Hunting is just something I’ve always wanted to do, and I know that someday we’ll go back, my dad and me, to see if we can get another shot at that elk he’s always wanted.”

He almost had that shot even as they rode off the mountain. “At one point we heard a bugling elk,” Ron Jr says. “We looked up, and there about a

hundred metres off the trail was a pretty nice bull.” With a smile, he told his father to get off his horse and go shoot it. “I probably couldn’t hit it anyway,” his father said.

To which his son replied, “If I got off and made it chase me, I’ll bet you could hit him.” They laughed, two men in the mountains, thinking about the shot of a lifetime—a father’s arrow that had saved the life of his son.

*Treated for his wounds, Ron Jr was discharged from hospital after a day.*

**“Are Men Smarter? Researcher Says Yes,”** declared a headline on the CNN website. Squashing that theory was a link just below it to another article—  
**“Study: Men delay medical care when the game’s on.”**

*Amy Baik*



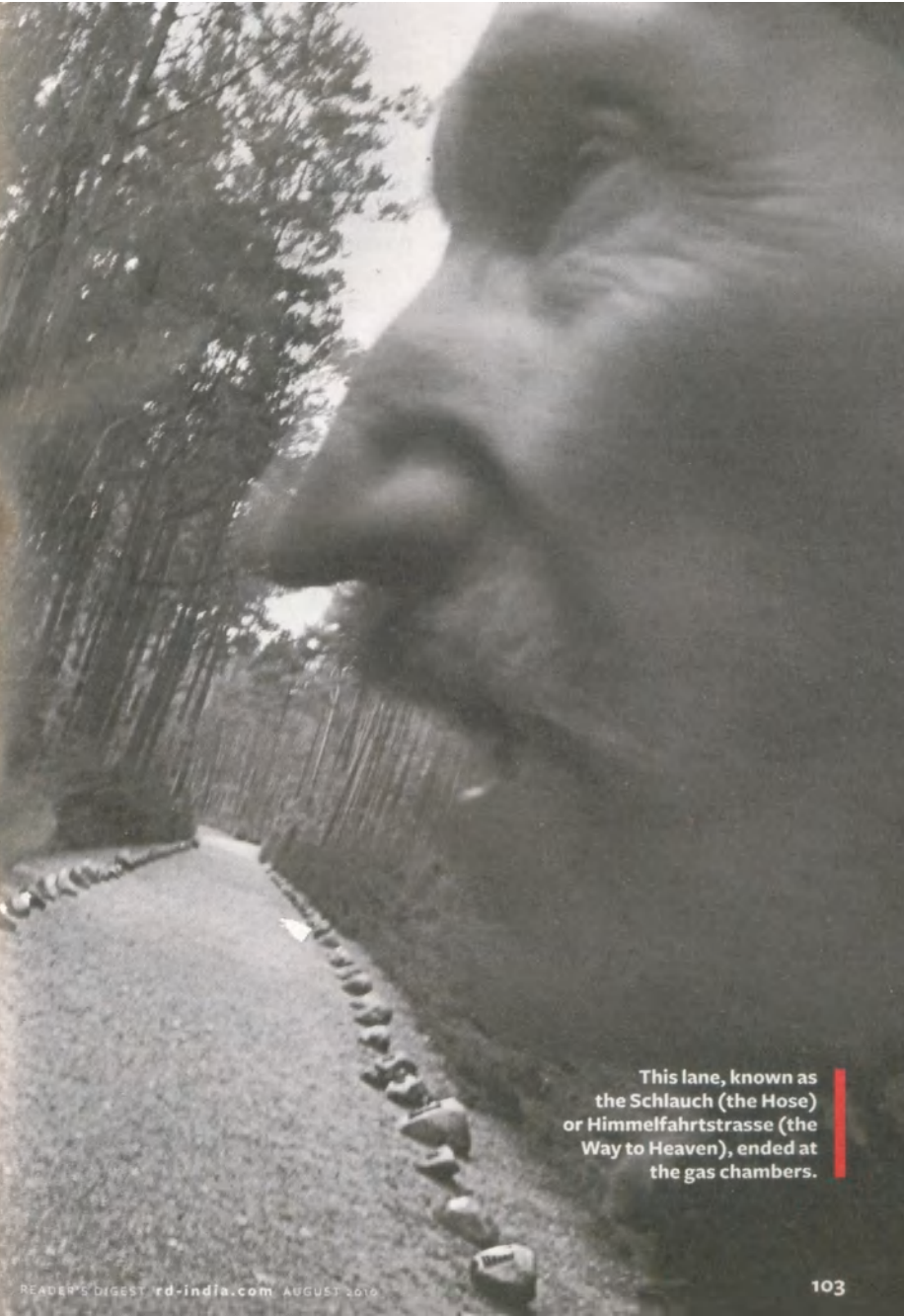
# The Secrets of Sobibor

## An Oral History

Sobibor village, deep in occupied Poland, was a notorious World War II extermination camp where the Nazis, according to estimates, killed at least 200,000 Jews, mostly in gas chambers. But Sobibor has a unique history because its inmates revolted successfully in October 1943 and some escaped. After the revolt, the Nazis burned, blew up, and buried the site. But survivors, witnesses, and now a group of scientists are uncovering the grim truth of Sobibor.

BY LEONARD FELSON

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY NANCY COVENEY



This lane, known as  
the Schlauch (the Hose)  
or Himmelfahrtstrasse (the  
Way to Heaven), ended at  
the gas chambers.



## The People of Sobibor

### The Survivor

Selma Wijnberg  
Engel, 88; retired  
jeweller; Branford,  
Connecticut, USA



### The Villager

Jan Manaj, 83;  
farmer; Luta, Poland



### The Searcher

Yoram Haimi, 49;  
expedition leader and  
archaeologist, Yad  
Vashem International  
Institute for Holo-  
caust Research and  
Ben-Gurion University  
of the Negev, Israel



### The Archaeologist

Richard Freund, 55;  
director, Maurice  
Greenberg Centre  
for Judaic Studies,  
University of  
Hartford, USA



### The Historian

Avinoam "Avi" Patt,  
34; assistant professor  
of history, Maurice  
Greenberg Centre  
for Judaic Studies



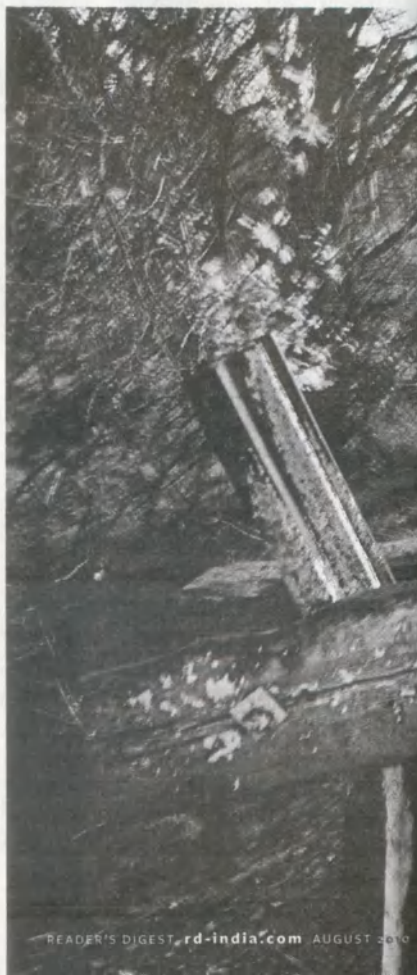
### The Geophysicist

Paul Bauman, 51;  
chief geophysicist,  
WorleyParsons, a  
global energy, mining,  
and engineering firm  
in Canada

How does history uncover an atrocity?

How does science make sense of evil?

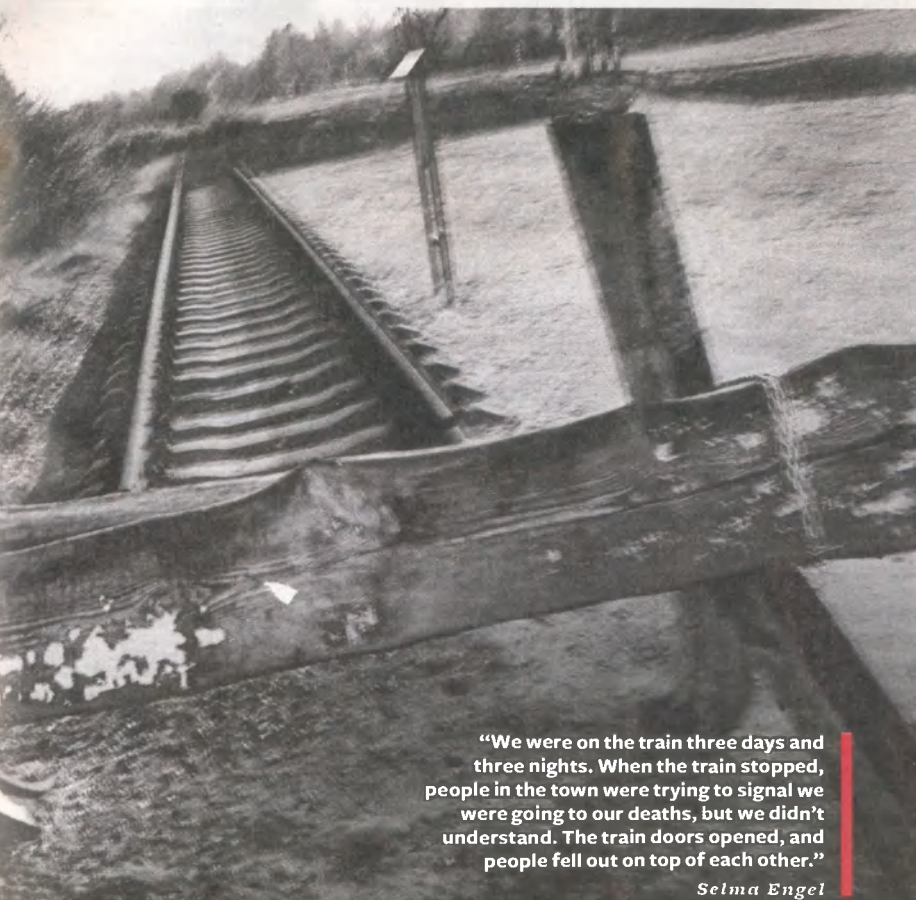
The team that examined Sobibor in 2008 includes experts of all types. Yoram Haimi, an Israeli archaeologist and nephew of two Sobibor victims, has led three expeditions to the death camp since 2007. Avi Patt, a Holocaust historian from Connecticut (and himself the great-grandson of victims), interprets the past for the team,





while Richard Freund, a Judaica scholar, has helped raise money and spread awareness of the work to be done. Revealing what lies beneath the soil while respecting the dead, the team depends on the instruments of Canadian geophysicist Paul Bauman. And of course, to help the world remember what it must never forget, history relies on eye-witnesses like Jan Manaj and survivors like Selma Engel, who has the first word.

**"I grew up** in Zwolle, Holland. My parents owned a kosher hotel. My father died in 1941, before the Germans started rounding up the Jews. After my mother and my three brothers were sent away to Poland by the Germans, I didn't want to live in the apartment anymore. A Catholic priest found a place for me to stay. One night, the gestapo broke into the home. I didn't



**"We were on the train three days and three nights. When the train stopped, people in the town were trying to signal we were going to our deaths, but we didn't understand. The train doors opened, and people fell out on top of each other."**

*Selma Engel*

**"The Germans told them they had to take a shower because of the typhus outbreak. After that, they said, you can write to your family in Holland and tell them that you arrived at the camp. I saw people walking with their whole families to the showers. I heard a boy say to his father, 'I want to go with you, Daddy.' And the father said, 'After the shower, we'll see each other'."**

*Selma Engel*



have enough time to escape. I was 20. [After jail in Amsterdam and a concentration camp in the Netherlands], they sent me to Sobibor in a freight train."

*Selma Engel, the survivor*

**"Many camps** at the end of World War II were destroyed, dismantled, or burned out of fear of being discovered by Allied forces. The open question was, What happened to Sobibor? This is exactly the kind of project we can do. Instead of spending years digging with no direction, we can map the subsurface to determine where to dig. From an archaeologist's viewpoint, Sobibor is virgin territory. It has never been systematically excavated since it was cleared by the Nazis, who planted forests there to hide what they did. [This team] will be the first to document, in a dignified and scientifically accurate way, the entire sinister process without having to disturb human remains."

*Richard Freund,  
the archaeologist*

**"At least 167,000 people** were on the transport list. They got off, and a couple of hours later, they were ash. When we arrived to map the site, I felt a little choked up. It's very stark, that area. It's all weeds and somewhat derelict. You realize how insane the whole thing was, how hopeless for the people getting off the trains. They had no idea what was in store for them."

*Paul Bauman, the geophysicist*

**"Before the war,** Luta was predominantly a Ukrainian village, with

Poles and Jews. I had Jewish friends in school—Hanshe, Moishe, Yankel. Hanshe was very pretty. And the Germans came and took these Jewish families to the forest and shot them. In Luta, everyone knew the Germans were building a death camp nearby, but no one said anything. Everyone was looking out for himself. On one occasion, all the men were taken by Germans to be shot in retaliation for the partisan attacks on the German soldiers. They were almost executed, but the women of Luta bought them back. They paid the Germans with a huge supply of fresh eggs."

*Jan Manaj, the villager*

**"Passengers** [disembarking] at the station had to go through various procedures: division according to sex, the surrender of their suitcases, removal of clothing, cutting of women's hair, and the confiscation of possessions and valuables. On their way to the gas chambers, the naked victims passed various buildings: warehouse barracks; a former forester's house (used as the camp offices and living quarters for some of the SS men); a small agricultural area with stables for horses, cattle, swine, chickens, and geese; and a small wooden Catholic chapel. A high observation tower overlooked the entire area. The exterminations were carried out in the northwestern part of the camp, the most isolated area. It contained the gas chambers, burial trenches, and housing for the Jewish prisoners employed there. A path, one to two metres wide and 150



metres long, led from the reception area to the extermination area. The path was fenced in on either side with barbed wire, intertwined with pine branches. Through it, the naked victims were herded towards the gas chambers.”

*Richard Freund*

**“We were hit** with whips. There was one woman. Her baby fell, and she said, ‘Can I take my baby?’ A German hit her in the face. She was bleeding. He told her, ‘We’ll take care of your baby.’ And they threw them in the fire. From there, we passed a whole bunch of Germans, and they picked me out [along with] a group of Dutch girls that I’d met in the Amsterdam jail. Somehow we stayed together—that was our luck. And the Germans say to us, ‘Go on the side.’ We had no idea what would happen to us.”

*Selma Engel*

**“Most of my Jewish friends** and their families never made it to Sobibor. They were taken into the forest and shot, then buried alongside the road. When I was about 16, I was forced one cold December day in 1942 to take the family’s horse and wooden cart, the one we used to carry hay or produce, to transport Jews to Sobibor. I wasn’t the only one. Every peasant had to provide a cart. My father was supposed to transport the Jews, but he was so scared, he hid, and I had to do it.”

*Jan Manaj*

**“Sobibor was the second** killing centre constructed as part of Operation Reinhard. It was built along the rail-

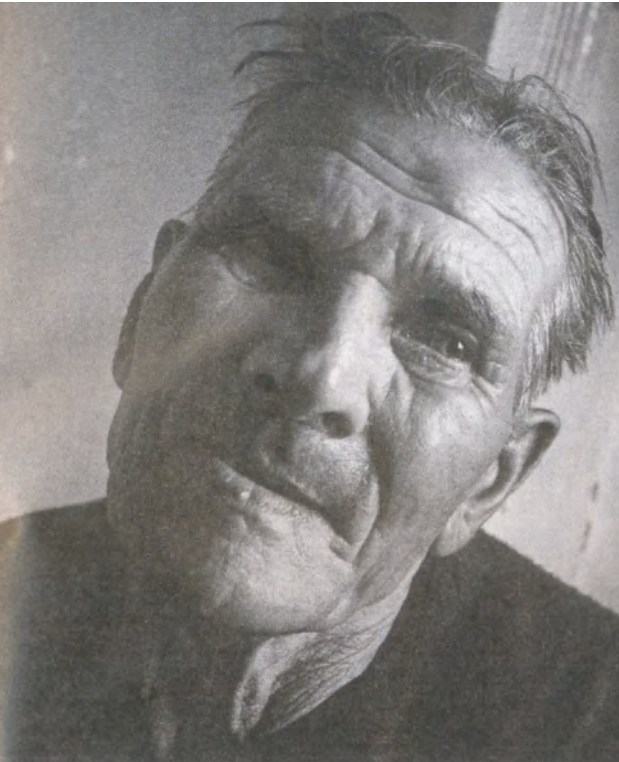
way line, in a wooded, swampy, thinly populated region. The camp covered a rectangular area of 400 by 600 metres and was surrounded by a minefield 15 metres wide. This was the site, in fact, where my great-grandparents on my mother’s side had been deported from Vienna in the spring of 1942 to meet their deaths.”

*Avi Patt, the historian*

**“We used GPR**—ground penetrating radar. Think of it as an MRI of the ground. We were hoping to see construction material, concrete, wood, materials that wouldn’t be detected by other instruments. We used a high-resolution metal detector, the kind used to search for unexploded bombs and shrapnel. We wanted to find rail ties and spikes, barbed wire, spades, shovels, eating utensils. We had another detector, an EM 38. It is sensitive to subtle changes in conductivity. It can differentiate between compacted soil in a trench versus undisturbed soil. We could use it to uncover mass burial plots if the ashes gave off salt. Our magnetometer measured, in incredibly high resolution, the earth’s magnetic field. Two things will change the magnetic field: buried iron or steel and burned material.”

*Paul Bauman*

**“I grew up hearing** about how my two uncles—Maurice and Yahia Ben Zaquen—moved from their native Morocco to Paris in the 1930s to open a photography studio. They sent money and notes home to the family. The notes always ended, “Take



“Once we got to Sobibor, the guards took the carts into the camp and left the peasants outside. I knew what was going to happen to my passengers. Everyone in the village knew. You could smell the smoke all the way from Sobibor to Luta. There’s not a moment in my life when I forgot what happened. I can’t forget. I remember all the time.” Jan Manaj

care of our little sister,’ who was my mother. The notes stopped suddenly in 1941, after the Germans occupied Paris. Four years ago, I woke up suddenly needing to know what happened to them. I went to Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust memorial and the world authority on documenting and archiving that history.”

*Yoram Haimi, the searcher*

“**The Germans shot** and killed over a million Jews in their communities, but it was too hard, too labour-intensive, and a waste of ammunition. Heinrich Himmler, leader of the SS, said, ‘We need

an easier way.’ So they took the euthanasia staff, which had already secretly gassed people in Germany, to Sobibor. Franz Stangl [the commandant at Sobibor] was one of them. Psychologically, it made it much easier on the Germans because they didn’t have to kill one to one.”

*Avi Patt*

“**We were sent** to a small barracks. In the afternoon, we had to start working. We had to sort the contents of the backpacks. We saw packages of food and very nice clothes, everything you could have wanted. Sometimes we find a child in the luggage. Then I see all

the women without hair. They go into the barracks with the showers, except no water comes out."

*Selma Engel,  
diary, April 9, 1943*

**"When I arrived** [at the site], my heart started to pound. I feel electricity in my fingers."

*Yoram Haimi*

**"Haimi has attempted** one of the most daunting tasks that an excavator undertakes, excavating a place where you have a personal connection: an extermination camp."

*Richard Freund*

**"Every day the Germans** made us do something else. One day we had to walk for hours and sing songs. Some Jewish people had an instrument, and we had to dance. Chaim Engel asked me to dance. First time I met him, he fell instantly in love with me. That's the way I met Chaim, my husband. First day. He was from Poland. I did not know what was happening at Sobibor until two prisoners told me that all the people that came the same time I did were sent to the gas chambers and burned."

*Selma Engel*

**"When the gas** chambers were filled with victims, the gas that was vented

Barbed wire  
Bullets  
Bullet cartridges  
A rusted curling iron  
Cuticle scissors  
A soldier's boot heel or stirrup  
A metal plate and soup bowl  
A bicycle wheel  
Knives  
Spoons  
Belt buckles  
Cigarette lighters  
Metallic cigarette cases  
Perfume and medicine bottles  
Dentures  
Glasses  
Jars from the Netherlands that probably contained disinfectants

*A partial list of  
the team's findings*

into the rooms asphyxiated the victims in about 20 to 30 minutes. Before being [burned] and buried, the bodies were searched for valuables, and gold teeth were removed."

*"Excavating Nazi  
Extermination  
Centres," by Isaac  
Gilead, Yoram Haimi, and  
Wojciech Mazurek, 2009*

**"We stole** from the backpacks. There was food there. I was very good at that. I put it in my bra, my underpants. That's the reason we stayed alive. I never believed that I would get out. I had typhus, and one day all the people who were sick were shot to death. I was just lucky."


*Selma Engel*

**"Yoram noticed** a number of post holes, and he used those to target his excavations for the possible site of the gas chambers. After the Germans blew up the gas chambers, they pulled the concrete pillars out of the ground, and pieces of metal fell into the holes. Those pieces of metal became readily identified as magnetic anomalies."

*Paul Bauman*

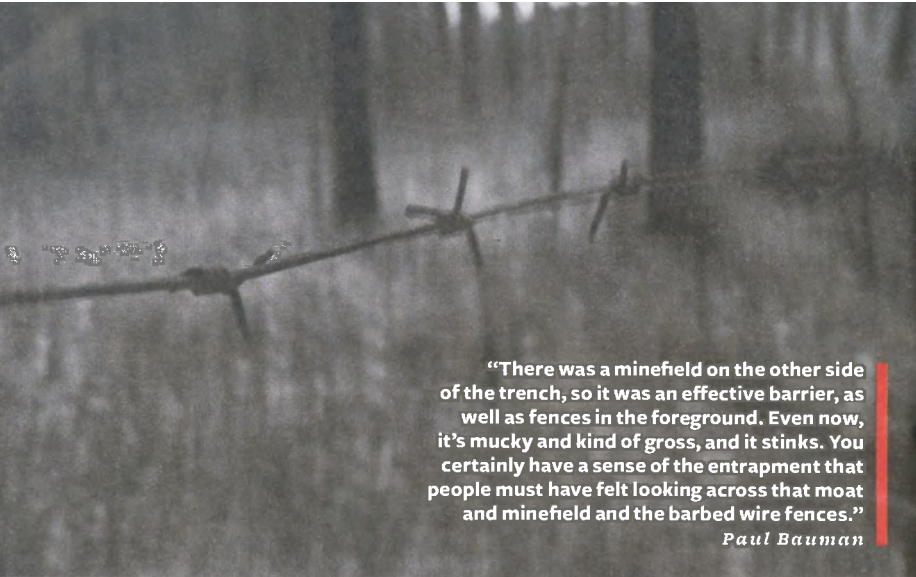
**"The rebellion at Sobibor** took place because of the Jewish Soviet army officers who were rounded up in





"A librarian suggested I start with a volume of thousands of French Jewish victims compiled by Serge Klarsfeld, the French Nazi-hunter. I ran my finger over some 52,000 names. So many names. This is futile, I thought. But then I saw my mother's maiden name—Ben Zaquen. There, in black and white, were my lost uncles' names."

*Yoram Haimi*



**"There was a minefield on the other side of the trench, so it was an effective barrier, as well as fences in the foreground. Even now, it's mucky and kind of gross, and it stinks. You certainly have a sense of the entrapment that people must have felt looking across that moat and minefield and the barbed wire fences."**

*Paul Bauman*

1943 as the Nazi army juggernaut pushed farther into the Soviet Union. These trained, fit officers formed the core of the rebellious crew at places like Sobibor."

*Richard Freund*

**"They devised** a daring plan. SS officers would be lured into storehouses on the pretext that they were to be given new coats and boots. Once inside, they would be attacked by the prisoners and killed with axes and knives. Nazi weapons were to be seized, and at roll call, the camp would be set ablaze. All prisoners would have a chance to bolt for freedom. Once outside Sobibor's gates, they would all be on their own."

*Avi Patt*

**"It seems they planned** the escape for about a week. We knew some-

thing had to happen. There was no work, no transport. Chaim said to me, 'Selma, put a lot of clothes on and be ready at four o'clock tomorrow.' So I did, and he was standing there waiting with a young man, who was involved in the uprising. The young man was supposed to kill a German with somebody else, but he was afraid to go. Chaim said, 'You have to go. Ten SS men are dead, the electricity is out, and the telephone is cut off. They know. Now we are dead anyway.' Chaim had a bread knife. We walk out on roll call, and I was alone. And the door opens, and out comes Chaim. That's a miracle. How would I have gone alone? I put a handkerchief around his arm, and he took my hand and says, 'Come,' and we start running. Everyone

starts running towards the entrance. We were running, running, running.”

*Selma Engel*

**“By dusk**, more than half the prisoners—about 300 people—had escaped. Most were killed by their Nazi pursuers or died crossing the minefields. After the revolt, some joined partisan units; others found shelter among sympathetic Poles. It’s estimated that just 50 of the escapees survived the war.”

*Avi Patt*

**“I was trying** to imagine myself in [the escapees’] shoes: Where do you go? What direction do you run in?”

*Paul Bauman*

**“This is the only revolt** that succeeds in all of World War II. I have a dream in the beginning that I will come here. Maybe I will find the identity cards of my uncles.”

*Yoram Haimi*

**“News of the escape**, which reached German headquarters after some delay because of the cut telephone lines, caused a good deal of panic. The search for escapees began only at dawn. Surveillance planes were employed to follow them in the fields and forests. The escapees split into smaller groups to avoid detection. In the week following the escape, 100 of the 300 escapees were captured or shot to death. The vast majority did not live to witness the day of liberation.”

*“The Nizkor Project,” by Yitzhak Arad, Yad Vashem Studies*

**“Chaim was the only man** who took his girlfriend. We were in the woods, and a bunch of people from Sobibor wanted to shoot Chaim because they didn’t want me to come along. [They feared Selma, who didn’t look or speak Polish, would give them away.] So Chaim and I went by ourselves. I was at Sobibor for six months. Chaim was there for a year.”

*Selma Engel*

**“The camp was** liquidated immediately and covered over with dirt and trees, giving the impression that there was never one there. Nazi officials feared other camps would rebel and chaos would break out. Ironically, in their attempt to cover up what happened, the Nazis provided archaeologists with the single best evidence of this unspeakable crime—an untouched site.”

*Richard Freund*

**“We filled** a weather balloon with helium, attached a digital camera, tethered the balloon to a line of string, and let it float 300 metres above the site. The camera shot hundreds of photographs, which we compared with a 1944 aerial photo shot by the German Luftwaffe six months after the camp was dismantled. We immediately saw different shades of green in the grassy field ... The dark green areas would be associated with mass burials because ash is a great fertilizer. When you think about the fact that by now each victim’s ashes comprise the volume of a teacup, you realize



you're looking at a mass grave of tens of thousands of people."

*Paul Bauman*

**"My whole family** got killed. I have nobody left in Holland. They all walked to the gas chamber. Healthy people with children. Twelve, 13, 14 years old. It is something that nobody can understand. And that is something I suffer now very much. I cannot sleep at night."

*Selma Engel*

**"When I tell** my family or friends the story of what happened, they don't believe it. They tell me I'm telling fairy tales."

*Jan Manaj*

**"There are** 20 different maps of Sobibor, [drawn up from the memories of survivors and the Germans and Ukrainians who worked there]. We want to try to map Sobibor like it should be, like it was. I feel that after the Germans exploded the important buildings in the camp, they buried everything in a pit in the woods. For

an archaeologist, this is the best place to excavate. And we're still looking for the gas chambers. There is also a plan to build a new museum once we finish our excavations. Four countries are working on this—Poland, Israel, Holland, and Slovakia. But we need funding to do all of this. I don't take money, and I don't want money. Just enough to pay the workers and to finish the job. This work is a document for the next generation about what happened at Sobibor and about the Nazis' attempt to erase history."

*Yoram Haimi*

**"My grandfather** spent the rest of his life mourning the loss of his parents—they died at Sobibor—and wishing he had died with them. I've tried to tell him and my paternal great-grandparents, 'Look, this family has continued. People lived.'"

*Avi Patt*



Read the diary Selma Engel kept during her escape and watch photographer Antonin Kratochvil's film about Sobibor at [readersdigest.com/sobibor](http://readersdigest.com/sobibor).

## SOCIAL NITWIT-WORKERS

**Facebook's back-and-forth** doesn't always bring out the brightest lights:

**Laura:** R.I.P. J.D. Salinger.

**David:** Noooooo!!! I loved *Animal Farm*.

**Katie:** I was so lucky getting diarrhoea ... that was like the best diet ever.

**Sarah:** I'm in a relationship and it's complicated.

**Rachel:** With who?

**Sarah:** Ryan and Eric.

**Maria:** I had to change my cell #. Call me and I will give it to you!

Source: [lamebook.com](http://lamebook.com)

# What I wish I knew about School

Marty Wilson has been studying what we all should have learnt back in the classroom, but didn't

**Knowledge of facts** and figures may get you top marks at school, but it's everything else we learn that determines the report card we get from life. Here are five things I wish I'd realized earlier in school (and life, for that matter).

**Working hard is really, really cool.**

"Marty is doing very well at school with an absolute minimum of effort. He tends to disrupt others." They could have photocopied my kindergarten report card and used it for the next 12 years. I was incredibly lucky to be born with a stupidly



high IQ. When they tested us, I actually got a better score than my teacher—I know, I'm a freak. Dad used to say that I either was going to end up as prime minister or living in a

# People I never gave a chance at school **turned out to be great people.**

volcano, stroking a cat saying "I've been expecting you, Mr Bond." As a consequence, I was that annoyingly smug class idiot who thought it was beneath him to study hard, and "way cool" to mock anyone who did.

Unfortunately for me, being able to sail through these formative years left me thinking my whole life would be the same. It took some big fat fail grades at a pharmacy degree, and my early bosses in advertising patiently kicking my lazy backside for me to realize that getting pass marks—without any effort at all—may get you the degree, but it doesn't get you the education. There's this other report card, called your character, where you only get an A for working to the absolute limits of your ability, purely for the satisfaction of being able to say: "I did my best."

## **It's healthy to be challenged.**

You see parents washing their kids' hands to protect them from infection. Of course, as soon as our kids are out of our sight, no amount of soap and water will stop them wrestling and sharing mucus, head lice and the bugs that cause pustules to grow in unsightly places. And this is a good thing. It builds their immune systems and keeps them healthy.

It's the same with new ideas and

different points of view. We need to keep mixing things up and meeting new people all our lives, just to maintain a healthy perspective.

People I never gave a chance at school turned out to be great people. So I'd say to my younger self, "Don't just stick to your own friends. Make an effort to talk to people who don't fit the usual mould, they challenge your thinking and make life much more interesting. Don't hit 50 and still have only the same friends you had in school."

## **You can learn from everyone.**

My adolescent mates and I wasted so much time that we could have spent learning, snidely criticizing every teacher who wasn't exactly like us, or our parents. Just because your geography teacher wore shirts that looked like they were made from curtain material doesn't mean he didn't know anything.

I remember having a teacher once who had spent years among Aboriginal communities. He could have taught my obnoxious snotty-nosed 15-year-old self so much, but we rejected the guy outright because he had one eye that turned to the right. So when the poor guy glared at us and said, "You there. Stand up!" two sep-



arate students would get to their feet. Gut-bustingly funny at the time, cringeworthy now.

## **We're all tested by different things.**

What I find easy and enjoyable might terrify you. This came up when I spoke to a German woman called Karen Goeb whose son, Jensen, is confined to a wheelchair. Karen said she worked herself up worrying about how he would handle school. She needn't have worried; Jensen loves it and it loves him.

Then, one day out of the blue, when Karen was just about to start congratulating herself, Jensen came home from school in absolute floods of tears talking about "something that happened in science class."

When Karen asked him, "What's wrong? Did you hurt yourself? Did people tease you?" Jensen bawled "No. Some stupid scientists have decided that Pluto isn't allowed to be a planet anymore!"

## **Exam results do not define your life, but your attitude to learning can.**

It's absolutely OK to leave school not knowing that potassium perman-

ganate burns with a purple flame. With all mankind's accumulated knowledge just a Google search away, it's not your marks compared to other students' that matter, but your marks compared to how well you could have done. It's the habits and attitudes formed by how hard you prepared for your exams that will give you the life you want.

I've spent 20 years trying to discover what I want to do when I grow up. But it was only last year that I worked out the answer is "Keep evolving. And write about it."

That's why I now wholeheartedly thank my teachers—particularly the ones I treated so thoughtlessly—for showing me what legendary physicist Richard Feynman called "the pleasure in finding things out."

When my son brought home his first report card last year, we had a great chat and I told him that, yes, I was pleased with his grades, but I was thrilled with the comment that said "Connor loves to learn."

Here's to another testing year.

*Marty Wilson is an Australian stand-up comedian and professional speaker. His latest book is What I Wish I Knew About Love (Allen & Unwin).*

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## WAIST NOT, WANT NOT

**While watching** a program about fashion models, my friend turned to her husband. "I would love to have a body like that," she said.

"Why?" he asked. "You'd only stretch it out."

*Yvonne Mitchell*

# New Hope for an Old Scourge

Arthritis is a debilitating disease that affects millions of Indians, but treatments are improving rapidly

BY PREETI KHICHA

**Geeta Shah runs** her own business in Delhi, with many clients and 12 employees. "My day is filled with meetings, tight deadlines and long hours," says Shah\*, 58. For the past three decades, Shah has also managed a crippling disease.

The trouble started soon after Shah had her first baby about 30 years ago. Busy with taking care of her newborn, she didn't pay enough attention to the pain in her wrist. "When it became unbearable, I'd pop a painkiller," says Shah. In time, it spread to her knuckles and elbows. "At times, the pain and inflammation made even simple tasks

\*Names changed to protect privacy.

like opening a jar or clasping a door handle almost impossible," she says. The pain was sporadic and Shah treated it herself for seven years, but finally decided to see Dr S.J. Gupta, senior consultant rheumatologist at Delhi's Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals. After several tests, the diagnosis was rheumatoid arthritis (RA), a disease that affects millions of Indians.

RA is an autoimmune disorder that races through the joints like fire. It causes inflammation and destroys the bone-covering cartilage, a substance so smooth that no man-made material has yet been able to duplicate it. "A systemic disease, RA may also affect

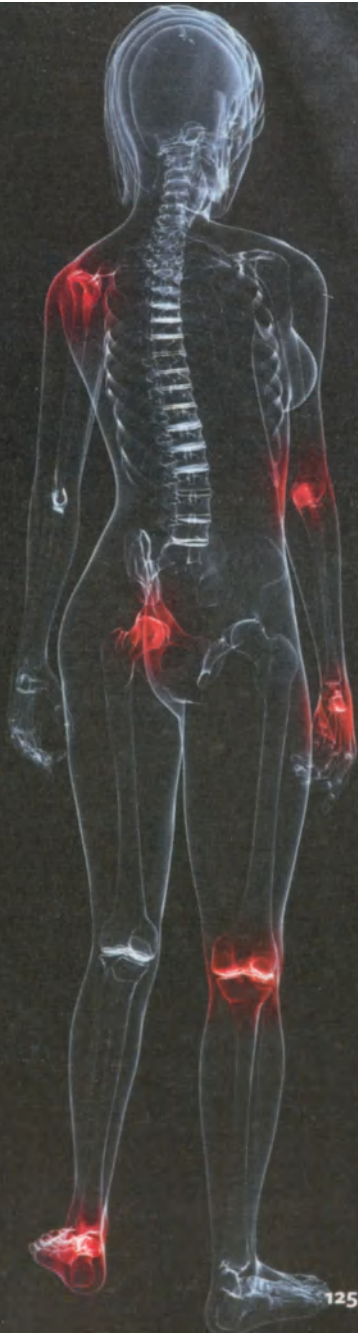
other parts of the body, like the heart, lungs and eyes,” explains orthopaedic surgeon Dr Buddhadeb Chatterjee, senior consultant at Apollo Glen Eagles Hospitals, Kolkata.

Shah was given NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). These drugs combat pain but they don't actually prevent destruction of the joints. For that, she was given a succession of traditional DMARDs (disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs). “With DMARDs, the pain would stop for some time, but then flare up again,” says Shah.

When traditional DMARDs failed to control the disease, Dr Gupta prescribed a new class of DMARDs known as biologics. Both traditional DMARDs and biologics suppress the immune system, but do it in different ways. As compared to traditional DMARDs, biologics selectively target TNF (tumour necrosis factor), a hormone we all have, but which RA patients have in excess. It is the TNF that causes inflammation.

Shah noticed the benefit of the biologic DMARD, a drug called Enbrel, right away. “Relief came in less than two weeks,” recalls Shah, who now takes weekly injections of Enbrel. “I no longer have unbearable pain and I am able to lead an active life. And I don't live on painkillers any more.” In other words, she got her life back.

Not all RA patients are helped by





traditional DMARDs, and such patients should receive biologics. It's important for them to get the biologics quickly since, with RA, most of the joint destruction takes place in the first two years. If they do get them promptly, 90 to 95 percent of the joint deterioration can be prevented. For the first time, there is real hope for people who used to face a bleak future.

According to Dr Sushil Sharma, chairman of the Arthritis Foundation of India, some studies say that around one percent of the total population suffers from arthritis. People often think that it only affects the elderly. Not so: even teenagers can be sufferers. Five years ago Prakash Mathur\* of Delhi, an avid basketball player, was 16 when he experienced fatigue, a sore hip and pain in his knees and ankles. "All of a sudden, I was unable to run properly on the basketball court," he says. "I thought it was a sports injury and saw a doctor." But a blood test and X-rays recognized what he had—ankylosing spondylitis, another type of inflammatory arthritis, which Dr Gupta says, affects about 0.5 to 0.6 percent of the population. It is three times more common in men than in women and usually affects 20- to 40-year-olds. In rare cases it also affects children. If left untreated, it can move up the spine and cause the vertebrae to fuse together and can also cause inflammation of peripheral joints. Once fused, the pain may reduce but so does the spine's flexibility.

For Mathur, the magic bullet was

infiximab, another biologic DMARD. "The pain has reduced considerably, and I can now walk without limping and even play basketball," says Mathur, now studying in the US.

Arthritis is not usually fatal. "But RA left untreated for instance," Dr Gupta opines, "can shorten a woman's life by about ten years and a man's by seven. It's comparable to the number of years a person can lose to heart disease."

However, the good news is that physicians have been learning a great deal about the more than one hundred varieties of arthritis and are better able to control many of them.

Jyoti Khicha, 50, is a Mumbai homemaker. When her left knee started aching constantly two years ago, she had a pretty good idea of what the problem was since her mother had suffered from osteoarthritis. An X-ray confirmed her suspicion. She had mild osteoarthritis and the space between her knee-joints was narrowing gradually.

"Osteoarthritis is the most common form of degenerative disease, affecting four percent of Indians," says Dr S. K. S. Marya, chairman and chief orthopaedic surgeon at the Institute of Orthopaedics & Joint Replacement Surgery, Max Healthcare, New Delhi. It often runs in families. Old age, obesity and previous history of joint injury, all increase the risk of developing osteoarthritis. (Other risk factors include smoking and alcohol abuse and, in women, premature menopause and amenorrhoea.)

A week-long course of anti-inflam-

ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY CLAUDIA CORNWALL

matory medicines soon brought Khicha's pain to a manageable level. She also gradually changed her lifestyle. "My doctor advised me against standing for long periods, especially in the kitchen, and to avoid any activity which put too much pressure on my knee," she says. "Regular exercise, physiotherapy, and diet and lifestyle changes are hugely beneficial in early cases of osteoarthritis," says Dr Chatterjee. Khicha agrees. "I do yoga stretching exercises recommended by my physiotherapist to keep my knee joints flexible," she says.

"You can prevent or delay the onset of osteoarthritis with regular exercise," says Dr C. Balakrishnan, consultant rheumatologist at P. D. Hinduja National Hospital & Medical Research Centre, Mumbai.

He adds, "Exercise helps keep the muscles around the joints strong, stabilizes the knee and reduces pain significantly. Exercise also helps reduce weight, and causes less wear and tear of the joints."

"Low-impact aerobics and quadriceps-strengthening exercises are best," says Dr Marya.

## Drugs for Osteoarthritis

When Khicha had her first flare-up, she was prescribed a drug with analgesic properties to reduce the pain and inflammation.

"Drug treatment for early cases of osteoarthritis usually begins with a course of analgesics," says Dr Balakrishnan. "Analgesics help reduce the pain and allow patients to exercise."

## The Ayurveda Alternative

**Innumerable Indians**, like 65-year-old Anandi Mehta\* of Mumbai, manage arthritis with ayurvedic remedies. "Ever since I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis 25 years ago, I tried different remedies, but the pain persisted," says Mehta, who gradually found even walking difficult.

In 2005, she started ayurvedic treatment and takes fortnightly sessions twice a year.

"We prescribed for her a range of treatments from herbal pouch massages, *shirodhara*—a technique where a mixture of medicated oil and water is poured drop by drop in a steady trickle on to a patient's forehead and scalp—herbal paste treatment and knee packs to improve the condition of her joints," says Dr Shaji Kannothe, senior ayurvedic physician at Soukhyia Holistic Health Centre, Bangalore. During treatment, Mehta follows a diet low in oil, salt and spices.

"Ayurveda can effectively treat osteoarthritis too. Depending on the condition, we give similar herbal treatments, the only difference being the combination of herbs," adds Dr Kannothe.

"If it wasn't for ayurveda, I would probably not be able to walk normally," says Mehta. "Now my movements have been restored, the swelling in my joints has reduced considerably and I am relatively pain-free," she says.

P. K.

For patients who can't tolerate NSAIDs in pill form, there are NSAID creams. "When rubbed on the affected joint," says Dr Marya, "these creams create a heating or chilling effect, which distracts the nerves from sending pain messages to the brain," he explains.

Recent advances in understanding the causes of osteoarthritis are giving researchers the tools they need to design even more effective drugs. Dr Jean-Pierre Pelletier, a Canadian professor of medicine and the head of the Arthritis Centre at the University of Montreal, is among the world's experts leading this charge. He says, "We used to think cartilage was like a piece of linoleum which becomes old and degraded if you walk on it too much. Now we know that more than mechanical factors are involved." Pelletier has focused on the role of enzymes that are part of the body's normal repair processes. He has shown that trauma to the joints causes the overproduction of these enzymes, which then "chew up" the cartilage.

## Surgical Techniques

Indian doctors perform thousands of total hip and total knee replacements every year. But newer, less invasive operations to restore joints ravaged by arthritis are also gaining favour—although for advanced-stage unsalvageable osteoarthritis, doctors recommend surgery.

## Hip Replacements

"Hip replacements help relieve pain, restore any loss of function in the hip and improve the quality of life," says Dr Nirad Vengsarkar, a Mumbai orthopaedic surgeon. "Traditional hip replacements are good for the elderly, but they only last 10 to 15 years. Younger people can opt for a lesser invasive procedure known as articular



**More than mechanical factors are involved.**

**Enzymes play a big part too.**

surface replacement (ASR). Here, only the diseased portion of the hip socket and femur is removed and the worn surfaces are replaced with thin metal, ceramic or polyethylene surfaces. ASR has the potential to last much longer than traditional hip replacement because more of the patient's own bone is preserved, and it thus results in a more natural joint movement," says Dr Vengsarkar.

While visiting Canada in 2000, Mumbai resident Upasana Grover\*, then 43, slipped and fell on an ice-covered road. Subsequently, she felt pain around her hip. A specialist diagnosed post-traumatic osteonecrosis—a severe form of arthritis.

Osteonecrosis occurs when there is loss of blood supply to the bone, causing a part of it to die. Eventually, the dead section of the bone becomes weak and collapses. When this happens to a joint, arthritis develops. In Grover's case, things got worse and she could barely walk after a few years.

"I relied on yoga and hydrotherapy for some years," she says. "In 2007, I finally had a hip replacement done."



Today, aged 54, Grover is able to manage long hours of work, travel, yoga and daily walks. "I have taken my replaced hip for granted," she smiles.

Metal-on-metal (MOM) replacements, like the one Grover had, are suitable for younger, more active people as they allow for increased levels of activity, including golf or tennis. "However, women of child-bearing age should avoid MOM. If they have a baby, the foetus could be harmed by the metallic ions that the friction creates," cautions Dr Marya. They can opt instead for costlier and longer-lasting ceramic-on-ceramic (COC) replacements.

Most recent are the ceramic-on-metal (COM) implants. While clinical trials for these hip bearings are still underway, preliminary data indicate they are more resistant to wear and tear than the MOM variety. "Do consult your surgeon as to which joint is best suited for you," says Dr Vengsarkar.

## Knee Replacements

Balbir Singh Renu, 73, is a Nagpur businessman and former badminton champion. In 2004, when his knees began to hurt, an X-ray confirmed that he had osteoarthritis in both knees. "But I kept putting off surgery. I was terribly scared," recalls Balbir Singh. "Soon the pain in both knees became so severe that I had trouble just standing." In February 2006, he finally had

both his knees replaced.

Now Balbir is as active as ever although his doctor has advised him against playing badminton because it puts too much pressure on the knees. He regularly plays tennis, which is easier on the knees.

Another successful patient of bilateral knee replacement is Professor A.B. Chakraborty, 60, a retired Kolkata professor. Six years ago, at the age of 54, he experienced acute pain in both his knees. His doctor, Dr Buddhadeb Chatterjee, found that the gap between his bones had reduced, causing discomfort and recommended a bilateral knee replacement using polyethylene and cobalt-chrome alloy.

One of the several advances in knee replacements is computer navigation technology. "Computers greatly enhance the placement and alignment of the knee prosthesis," says Dr Chatterjee, "Such precision is hard to achieve manually. There are also new implant designs like the rotating platform high flex design, which increases safety level in higher range of movement," says Dr Chatterjee.

After successful surgery, using computer navigation technology, Chakraborty has resumed his daily activities. "Earlier it was painful walking and I couldn't lead a normal life. After the surgery, I can walk, climb stairs and take public transport, absolutely pain-free," he smiles.

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**There's always a light at the end of the tunnel, but how nice it would be to have it inside the tunnel as well.**

*Sergei Runov*

WHEN THEY LAND YOU ON THE ICE AND THAT PLANE TAKES OFF  
YOU THINK THIS ~~WOULD~~ BE A ROMANTIC MOMENT...

BUT IT IS NOT.





## Adventure

**He trekked over 1000 km  
to the end of the Earth.  
Alone. In record time.  
And lived to tell the tale.**

# Journey to the South Pole

**BY TODD PITOCK**

One eye was frozen shut. He hadn't slept in days, and he was hallucinating.

The visions had been appearing for 36 hours already. Out of one eye, he could see his grandfather's house, but when he turned to look, it would disappear. His grandfather, wife, sisters and nephew would all appear behind him. He knew they weren't really there—his grandfather had died in 2002 and the others were back in the United States—but he figured he'd go with it, anyway.



"We're going to be okay," he told his visions. "We're going to make it."

He kept repeating the last line, knowing even as he spoke that his chances of survival were diminishing by the hour.

**Todd Carmichael, a 45-year-old** adventurer from Philadelphia, USA, had spent 39 days alone in Antarctica, where he'd walked more than 1000 kilometres pulling a sled he'd named Betty the Pig. He'd lost 23 kilos, and his chest was as tight as if his ribs were bound in plaster. The wind, sometimes reaching 160 kilometres an hour, struck his body like a boxer's blows.

The Pig—piled with 120 kilos of supplies, mostly food, when Carmichael started out more than a month earlier—was down to 27 kilos. But he'd lost so much strength that the sled felt just as heavy as before. He suspected his feet were frostbitten, but couldn't take off a boot to check; if he did, his foot would swell and he wouldn't be able to get the boot back on. Many trekkers had died because of bad feet.

He'd been hiking for more than 40 hours without stopping. The finish line—the American-operated research station at the South Pole—was so close he thought he could see it. The trouble was, he couldn't be sure it wasn't another hallucination.

He faced a crucial choice: keep pulling the sled and risk imminent collapse and death. Or drop the Pig and walk on without his gear and supplies. There was no margin for error if he misjudged the distance or if the station wasn't really there.

He dropped the Pig.

"I'll come back for you," he said. "I won't leave you here. I'll come back."

**Carmichael had set out on a similar** journey the year before. But weeks of unrelenting blizzards—fierce weather even by Antarctica's forbidding standards—had forced him to call for rescue. Quitting had been humiliating. At home, he'd fallen into a depression.

"Failure stays with you," says Carmichael, six foot three with a shaved

**Day 7 "Zero visibility, extremely low temperatures, blowing winds. It's going to be a rough day."**

dome, deep-set eyes and broad shoulders. "That feeling, from the moment I was evacuated, did not go away, day in, day out. I lived in it. I couldn't move on." The only thing that would assuage him was to try again. This time, he set his sights on a world record.

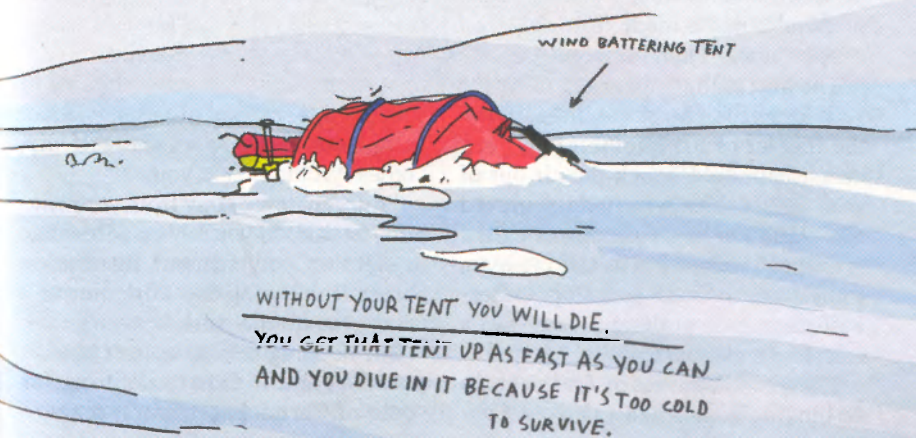
Fewer than a dozen people had ever done what Carmichael was attempting: 1110 kilometres alone, unassisted and unsupported—no food drops, no medical care, no animals pulling the sled—from the west coast of the Antarctic Ocean to the geographic South Pole. The record for the fastest solo trek, which Carmichael was aiming to break, was held by a British woman, Hannah McKeand: 39 days, 9 hours and 33 minutes. Carmichael would be the first American.

**"It's no different from challenges** other people might want to face," Carmichael said before he departed, on November 12, 2008. "This just happens to be mine. It's a very primal thing, the

desire and willingness to trek across vast distances. We've loaded up carts and pulled since the dawn of man."

His wife, Lauren Hart, 42, understood this about him. They met in 2004, when she was interviewing him for a Philadelphia TV station. She asked why he'd never married. "Because I'm a trekker," he said. She recognized that his journeys weren't just a hobby; rather, they tapped into something deeply nomadic in him—something that went beyond competition to embrace, as he put it, "that sense of being completely off the grid."

They married in 2005, and at home Carmichael was a devoted, even conventional husband, running the business he founded—La Colombe Torrefaction, a high-end coffee roaster and retailer—and accompanying his wife to ice hockey games, where she sings the national anthem. She missed him when he left on long treks, but she didn't try to stop him. A cancer survivor, Hart knew what it meant to



reach exhaustion, yet press on. After Carmichael failed in his first Antarctic attempt, it was his wife who encouraged him to set out again.

He did it with another loved one in mind. His grandfather, a Second World War pilot, had painted "*Tout Jour Prest*," Old French for "always ready," on his plane. Carmichael had the phrase tattooed on his right arm.

ing off the trek at that point would have made sense. He had never planned to walk to the Pole.

But he couldn't quit. From age 17 when he'd traversed Washington's Columbia Basin desert for a week by himself, to dozens of other solo treks across forbidding routes through the Sahara and Saudi deserts, he'd conceded defeat only once, in Antarctica

## **Day 22** "My cheeks ache so bad. I feel like I've been punched in the face. Cold hurts."

**It was minus 37 degrees C when** Carmichael began his trek. At Hercules Inlet, the starting point, he duct-taped his cheekbones and nose to soften the impact of frost and wind. He pulled on his wool Flyers cap and goggles, strapped on cross-country skis and harnessed Betty the Pig to his shoulders. He glanced at his marine compass, his main navigational tool, which he secured below his chin with a kind of metal bow tie made from soldered copper pipes. Then he set off.

The first incline ran unrelenting for 92 kilometres, the slope intensifying the impact of 105 kilometre-an-hour gusts that could knock the air out of your lungs. The wind had sculpted snow and ice into formations called "sastrugi," sometimes as tall as a man, sometimes as wide as a ship. Otherwise, there was nothing to see—just a vast, barren landscape.

Thirteen kilometres in, Carmichael's ski binding broke, then a ski pole. Call-

"I've come so far, and I'm never going to get another shot," he told the video camera he brought to record and verify the journey. He was disheartened—but still determined to beat the record.

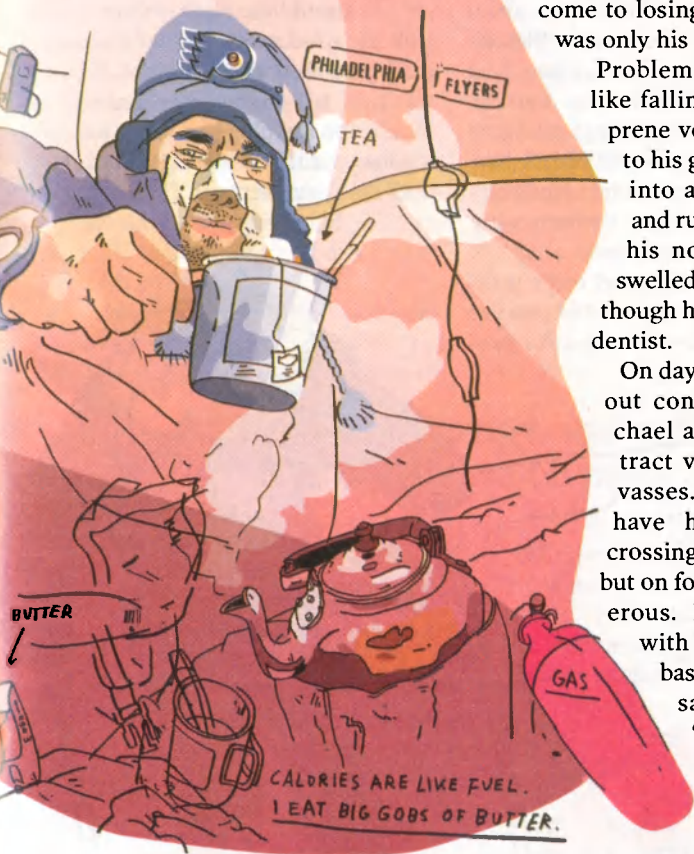
*Tout jour prest.*

**Within two weeks, Carmichael was 80 kilometres behind McKeand's pace.** He recalibrated, increasing his daily schedule from seven to ten 70-minute marches—a goal of 31.7 kilometres per day—to make up the deficit. In business, Carmichael believed the key to success was sticking to a plan without compromise. If you let yourself slip, laxness would defeat you.

"You can never stray from your routine," he said. "If you rely on adrenaline or emotion, you burn out. Inspiration comes from doing the work, not as a catalyst to do the work."

But keeping to a plan isn't always possible, and it didn't take long for some of Carmichael's worst fears to





his feet. He caught himself on one side of the ledge, held on tight and pulled himself up.

It was the closest he'd ever come to losing his life. And it was only his fourth day out.

Problems accumulated like falling snow. A neoprene veil he'd attached to his goggles stiffened into a board of frost, and rubbed the skin off his nose. His cheeks swelled from the cold as though he'd been to a bad dentist.

On day seven, in white-out conditions, Carmichael arrived at a long tract veined with crevasses. He wouldn't have had a problem crossing them on skis—but on foot, it was treacherous. He checked in with Patriot Hills, the base camp, using his satellite phone. "Do not move," they told him. "Absolutely do not move."

Carmichael

took stock of his position relative to McKeand's record. I'll take that advice under consideration, he thought, and pressed on.

**Now he was covering at least 30 kilometres a day. Once, he went 42.8 kilometres, thought to be the longest**

materialize. In Antarctica, nature itself lays traps. Tiny shards of ice collect on one side of a crevasse until they bridge the gap, creating a solid-looking veneer hiding a seemingly endless blue abyss. Carmichael stepped on one such bridge only to feel the ground yawn beneath

anyone has trekked in Antarctica in a single day. His agony was matched by surges of joy, when he believed he was doing what he was put on Earth to do.

"The object of life is not to avoid pain," he said into the camera. "Beautiful things sometimes require pain, and this is one of them." Another time, he contemplated how he kept going. "I think, It could be worse," he said. "I think of my wife. She survived non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a year of chemotherapy. That's a lot worse than this."

He had another reason to be positive. He and Hart were in the process of adopting a six-year-old Ethiopian

girl named Yemi. He was excited about becoming a father.

And life on the ice kept him busy. Via satellite, he'd get text messages from people around the world following his trek. He used every waking minute to read, prep food, set up his tent. When it was time to rest, he'd zip himself into his cocoon sleeping bag, cover his eyes to block out the 24-hour light and sleep until his alarm went off. Then he'd scari



down 1000 calories of porridge and 850 calories of chocolate-mint patties and sausages. Food kept him warm. Eating every time he took a break, with big meals at breakfast and dinner, he ingested 8000 calories a day. But he burned 12,000, a deficit that caused him to lose half a kilo a day.

**Determination and discouragement** ebbed and flowed. By day 27, Carmichael was heavy with doubt. His face was battered and he had burn marks under his eyes.

"I'm beginning to question whether it's physically possible to do this," he said to the camera. In vast fields of

food. He wanted to speak to his wife, but his satellite phone was dead. He reached for the backup to find that it, too, was useless.

He thought of Robert Falcon Scott, the British polar explorer who in 1912 had perished, along with his team, 18 kilometres from safety. "I'm two days away from the Pole. No one knows where I am. There's a small possibility I could die out here," Carmichael said.

By now, his muscles had lost their elasticity and hung from his bones like loose rope. For days he'd been coughing up flecks of blood from "Eskimo lung," frostbite on the lung tissue.

That's when the hallucinations

## **Day 27** "It's really tough mentally. This is the closest I've come to packing it in."

snow, he sank to his knees with each step. The constant plunging and lifting was like being on a stairclimber for 14 hours a day.

On day 35, he was still 32 kilometres behind McKeand's pace. Yet the record would soon be the least of his worries.

**About 130 kilometres from the Pole,** Carmichael's GPS failed. His compass would only point him to the magnetic pole, hundreds of kilometres from his destination—the research station. He needed a more precise measure to be sure of his direction. If he could remember the last position he'd read on the GPS, he might live. If not, he would die.

That wasn't all. His stove gave out, so he had no way to melt snow or hydrate

began. He saw his relatives, and the station appeared as a speck in the distance. Was it there? Was it three kilometres away—or 16?

The Pig carried his tent and all his supplies. It had kept him alive, and he'd become as emotionally attached to it as a toddler to a blanket. But now it was a millstone. He unhooked it.

He took only his camera, started off, hesitated, turned back. Without the Pig, his sense of isolation was total and profound. He willed himself on. Whenever he lost sight of the station, he'd turn to check his tracks and make sure he was not walking in circles.

And then, on December 21, having trekked 47 hours straight, he stepped up onto the wide airstrip of the South Pole station.



Inside, they'd known Carmichael was coming, but weren't sure when he'd arrive. A woman came out and waved to him. She pointed to the ceremonial pole, which he touched as he verified his time. He'd broken the record: 39 days, 7 hours, and 49 minutes, less than two hours ahead of McKeand.

**Carmichael was elated. But he knew** he looked bad and sounded confused. He told the woman who greeted him that he had to go back out to the ice: "I have

pole, take a photo and depart. A handful of trekkers on expedition teams come in, almost all of them through a club called Ski Last Degree, which arranges treks from the 89th to the 90th degree south latitude, a 111-kilometre journey. And eight or ten hardcore trekkers—the sort of people who, like Carmichael, regard Everest as a glorified Disney World—arrive every year in small groups. They, like anyone who comes through, are required to be self-sustaining.

**Day 37** **"I've got three bags of food left and I need to get there in three days. I have to do this. I have to try."**

to get the Pig." She didn't understand, but he was too exhausted to explain. She took him inside.

"What can we do for you?"

"I'd just like something to eat," Carmichael said.

After more than a month of 4000-calorie-a-day deficits, he felt as if his brain were out of gas. He could smell eggs and maple syrup on a big buffet nearby. He hadn't had a proper meal in almost six weeks.

"I'm sorry," she told him, "but we can't feed tourists."

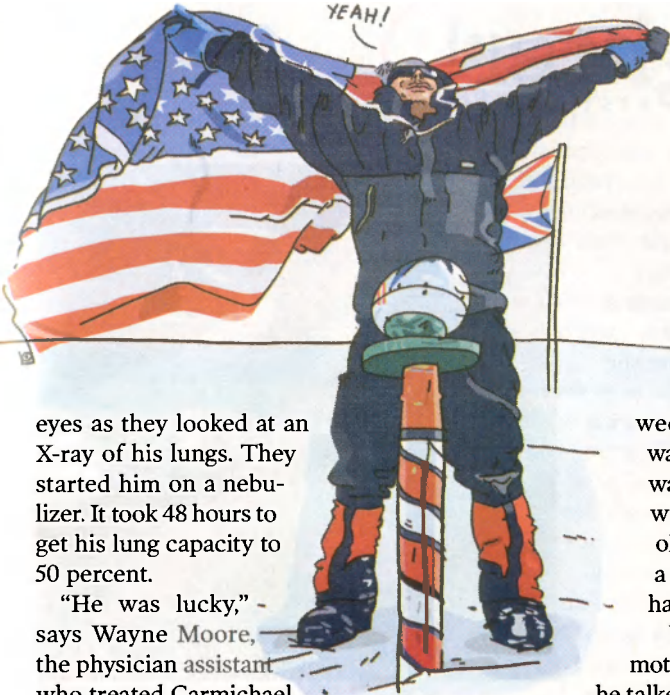
"I just need calories," he said. "Just give me some condiments and I'll be fine. I just need some sugar."

But the station policy was strict: Provisions were for authorized personnel. The station gets about 100 visitors a season, mostly wealthy tourists who fly in to stand next to the ceremonial

Carmichael had arranged to have Patriot Hills drop supplies, and they had arrived as planned. But he didn't know where they were and didn't have the strength to pull the box apart, anyway. He was also battling to breathe.

He convinced the woman to ask the station manager to make an exception. While she was gone, a kitchen worker who had heard the exchange gave him two big cookies piled with frosting, which he wolfed down. Then he went out to the tent the station provides for visitors, who aren't allowed to sleep inside the buildings. He curled up on the icy floor and fell asleep.

By now the staff realized that Carmichael wasn't a tourist, and needed help. When the station manager found him coughing up quantities of blood in his sleep, the medical staff rushed to act. Carmichael could see the panic in their



eyes as they looked at an X-ray of his lungs. They started him on a nebulizer. It took 48 hours to get his lung capacity to 50 percent.

"He was lucky," says Wayne Moore, the physician assistant who treated Carmichael.

"I think he had maybe 24 hours to live. His airway would have swollen to the point where he wouldn't have been able to move air."

Carmichael's timing was also fortunate. "The next day, visibility went down to 400 metres and stayed like that for days," Moore says. "There was no way he would have seen the station."

**Everyone at the station wanted to see Carmichael.** Once he was stable, he offered to give a talk about his experience to the staff. "I thought five or six people would come," he recalls. More than 150 showed up.

The road to recovery was longer than his four days at the station and the three days to get back to Philadelphia. A few

weeks later, his skin was still burned, and he was still 10 kilos underweight. But that was okay. He had achieved a goal that had haunted him.

When asked what motivated him on the ice, he talked about the paradox

of being self-reliant while also needing other people. The hundreds of text messages he received, many from people who'd survived cancer or other challenges, helped keep his spirits up.

"On one hand, I felt like I couldn't fail in front of all these people who were counting on me," he says. But then, thinking about what they'd overcome inspired him, too. "Inspiration is like love. It's something you get in proportion to what you give."

Soon he would give—and receive—even more. When Hart met him at the airport in Philadelphia, she had news of their daughter. "Yemi," she told him, "will be ours in a few months."

*Tout jour prest*, he thought. Always ready. ■

# Laughter! :) THE BEST MEDICINE

**E**very night, Harry goes out drinking. And every night, his wife, Louise, yells at him. One day, one of Louise's friends suggests that she try a different tack. "Welcome him home with a kiss and some loving words," she says. "He might change his ways."

That night, Harry stumbles back home, drunk as usual. But instead of berating him, Louise helps him into an easy chair, puts his feet up on the footstool, removes his shoes, and gently massages his neck.

"It's late," she whispers. "I think we should go upstairs to bed now, don't you?"

"Might as well," says Harry. "I'll get in trouble if I go home."

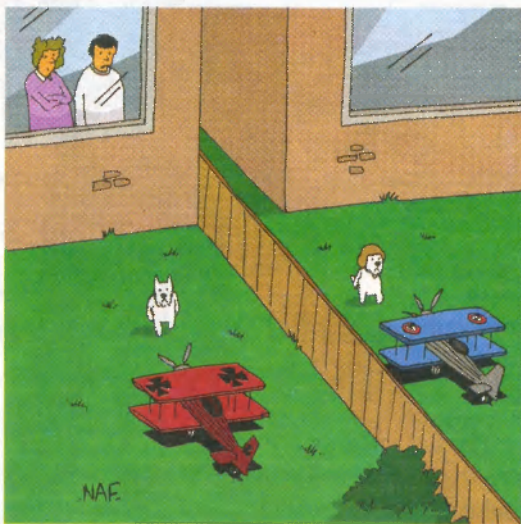
**My house is** haunted by a ghost-writer. Last night, I came home and my autobiography had been written.

*Craig Sharf*

**I enrolled in** an online school to become a private investigator. I gave them my money, but I never

**Light travels faster than sound—is that why some people appear bright until you hear them speak?**

*Steven Wright*



*"Uh-oh, here we go—another dogfight."*

heard back from them. I thought, *Either I just got ripped off, or this is my first case.*

*Mike Vecchione*

**My mom wants** me to name my kids after people in our family. So I'm naming my firstborn Uncle Karl.

*Nick Vatterott*

**I've always been** a disappointment.

When I was five, I looked down at the crayons I was colouring with and sighed—when I was two, this is not what I saw myself doing at five.

*Eric Lyden*



**Overheard**—Two billionaires in conversation:

Warren: Remember when we were poor.

Bill: No.

Warren: Me neither.

Bill: You bet!

Warren: Sure, let's flip a coin.

Bill: Flip what?

Warren: Oh, never mind. I went to the bank yesterday to talk about a loan.

Bill: What do you need a loan for?

Warren: I don't, the bank does.

From the internet

**A man is madly** in love with a princess and wants to propose, but an evil witch has cast a spell on him, and now he can say only one word a year. So he waits 14 agonizing years—accumulating all his words—before approaching his beloved.

Finally, the big day arrives. When

he sees her, his heart skips a beat. He gathers his nerve, drops to his knees, and intones, "My darling, I have waited many years to say this: Will you marry me?"

The princess turns around, smiles, and says, "Pardon?" *Wesley Joubert*

**Is French kissing** in France just called kissing?

*Peter Kaye*

**Sam shows up** at a revival meeting, seeking help.

"I need you to pray for my hearing," he tells the preacher.

The preacher puts his fingers on Sam's ears and prays and prays. When he's done, he asks, "How's your hearing now?"

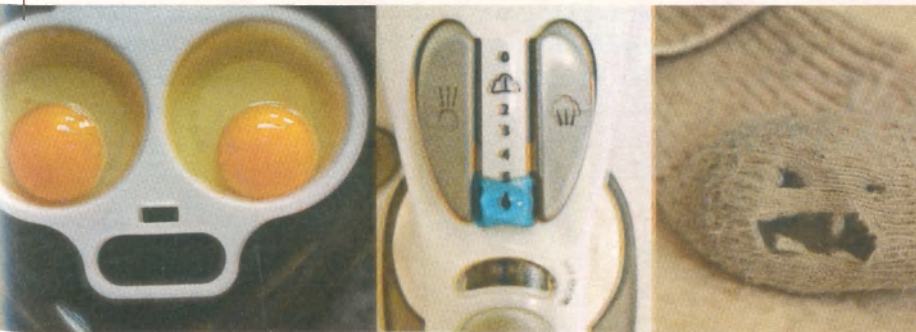
"I don't know," says Sam. "I don't go to court till next Tuesday."

*James Hoskin*

**Rs** Your favourite new joke or one-liner might be worth up to Rs1000. Send it to the Editorial address.

## WHY THE FACE?

Think you're being watched? These images from Flickr prove you are!





# What's the Fuss About **TRANS FATS?**

There's growing global alarm over their heart-health effects. Here's what you need to know about trans fats in foods

BY HELEN SIGNY

## **Q| What are trans fats?**

Trans fats, or trans fatty acids, are a type of unsaturated fat that acts like saturated fats. That is, they are bad for our heart health because they raise the level of “bad” cholesterol in our blood.

Most of the trans fats in our food—some 64 percent—are created as by-products of the process called hydrogenation, where food manufacturers bubble hydrogen through liquid oils, turning them into solids to make cakes and pastries. This process improves the food’s shelf life, flavour and stability.

Trans fats can also be produced by heating oil, and occur naturally in the meat and milk of ruminant animals such as cows and sheep.

## **Q| Why are they so bad for us?**

Large population studies have shown that people with a high intake of trans fats have higher levels of heart disease. Weight for weight, doctors believe trans fat is much more dangerous than saturated fat. That’s because not only does trans fat—like saturated fat—increase the level of “bad” or LDL cholesterol in our blood, it has an abil-

ity to lower the concentration of “good” or HDL cholesterol, which protects us against heart disease.

Research has shown that replacing trans fats with good fats could cut your risk of heart attack by a whopping 53 percent. There have also been some suggestions recently that trans fat plays a role in diabetes and may promote allergies in children, but the jury’s still out on this.

The US National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine has suggested the only safe level of trans fat is zero.

## **Q| Why all the fuss recently?**

In 2003, Denmark became the first ever country to legislate against trans fat in foods, banning all products that contain more than two percent trans fatty acids of total oil or fat in a food.

Then, in late 2006, New York’s Health Department required all of the city’s 20,000 restaurants to phase out any artificial trans fat, so that every serving of food you buy there should have less than 0.5 grams of trans fat.

Media and public concern has



sparked discussions with food industries about reducing levels further.

### **Q| Where do we get these trans fats from?**

While trans fats occur naturally in some meat and dairy products, it's not a good idea to severely limit these because then you would be cutting out on other important nutrients.

What concerns dietitians most is the trans fat that comes from the manufacturing process.

In Australia, for instance, margarine manufacturers phased out oils containing trans fats about ten years ago, and now only very cheap varieties contain them. But oils containing trans fats are still widely used in the manufacture of products such as biscuits, cakes, buns and pies, as well as for deep-frying some fast foods.

Since there's no requirement to label trans fat levels on every food, it's hard to know how much you're eating. In fact plenty of processed foods have levels high enough to significantly increase the risk of heart disease, if they were eaten regularly.

### **Q| What do they do to the heart?**

Coronary heart disease is a major cause of death globally. In most cases, it's caused by a condition called atherosclerosis,

where fatty deposits build up on the walls of the arteries, causing them to narrow and interrupt the flow of blood to the heart.

Low-density lipoproteins—LDL cholesterol—are an important component of these fatty plaques. Studies have shown a clear association between consumption of trans fats and high LDL levels.

Trans fats can also promote inflammation and have a role in other risk factors for heart disease.

A review of the role of trans fats undertaken for Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) found a clear association between trans fats and LDL, but pointed out that many of the studies did not distinguish between naturally occurring and manufactured trans fats.

In 2006, another review of the scientific literature, and published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, found that a two percent increase in energy intake from trans fat was associated with a 23 percent increased risk of coronary heart disease.

### **Q| So which are worse: trans fats or saturated fats?**

Weight for weight, trans fats are worse. The World Health Organization says that to be healthy, no more than one percent of



## What Fats You Should Use

**EXPERTS RECOMMEND THAT** you should use a variety of oils in food preparation, including canola, sunflower, soyabean, olive, peanut, sesame and grapeseed. You should avoid oils high in saturated and/or trans fats, including palm oil, tallow, lard, coconut oil, copha, coconut cream/milk (even reduced-fat varieties), cream, butter, ghee, shortening, vanaspati and baking margarine. Stick to baking, grilling or steaming rather than deep-frying.

**Baking:** Use a variety of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated oils and margarines, including those made from canola, olive, sunflower, soyabean and peanut.

**Spreading on bread:** Use a polyunsaturated or monounsaturated margarine spread.

**Deep-frying:** Not recommended by experts, especially cardiologists.

**Salad dressing:** Use sunflower, canola, olive, peanut, macadamia, sesame or grapeseed oils.

**Shallow/pan/stir-frying:** A variety of oils are suitable—including all those listed above.



our daily calories should come from trans fat and we should consume less than ten percent of calories from saturated fats. That means the biggest danger point in our diets is by far saturated fat.

Claire Hewat, executive director of the Dietitian's Association of Australia, is worried that all the hype around trans fat means people are losing sight of the real enemy: "For example, it would be the easiest thing in the world to get rid of the trans fats by switching to palm oil—but that has 50 percent saturated fat. It's very important not to focus just on trans fats."

The best advice, she says, is to work on getting your total consumption of saturated fat down. If you choose

products with very small amounts of saturated fat, chances are you'll be bringing your consumption of trans fats down, too.

### Q | Why not just ban all trans fat?

Concern about trans fat is becoming such a high-profile health issue that some governments are moving to ban them. Some governments have taken a wait-and-see approach. That's partly because the food industry has also been proactive in reducing trans fat levels of its own accord.

In Singapore, the Health Promotion Board has been in discussions with food manufacturers since 2004 about labelling the fat content of products and reducing levels further.

# What the terms mean

**WE NEED FAT** for energy and to absorb vitamins A, D, E and K and carotenoids. When eaten in moderation, fat is essential for good health—and it's especially important for children up to the age of two. However, some fats are better for us than others. Here's how to understand what fats are what:



**Cholesterol** is a fatty substance produced naturally by the body and found in our blood. LDL cholesterol clogs arteries and leads to heart disease, while HDL cholesterol helps to unclog blood vessels.

**Polyunsaturated fats** help to lower blood cholesterol if your meals are low in saturated fats. Contained in foods such as fish, nuts, polyunsaturated margarines and oils.

**Saturated fats** raise blood cholesterol.

Contained in some foods such as potato chips, manufactured cakes, biscuits and pastries, butter and dairy products.

**Monounsaturated fats** help to lower blood cholesterol if your meals are low in saturated fats. Contained in foods such as avocado, nuts and monounsaturated margarine and oils.

**Trans fats** act like saturated fats to raise LDL cholesterol and lower HDL cholesterol. Contained in foods which use hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated vegetable fats.

The terms "saturated" and "unsaturated" refer to the type of molecules in the fat. Saturated molecules have all their bonds used up, so they are more rigid and stable. Unsaturated molecules have some open bonds, resulting in a more reactive, liquid oil.

COURTESY HEART FOUNDATION

Hewat says it's easy to use different oils for frying, but it's not so simple changing the ingredients of pastries and biscuits. "By saying 'stop this today', the product that people like to eat will just disappear," she says. Here, the big discussion is over whether the amount of trans fat should be included on labelling.

## Q | What's the case for labelling?

If a product makes a health claim about its fat content—for example

that it is 97 percent fat-free or that it's cholesterol-free—it has to list its full fat profile. That's where you'll see information on fats such as saturated, trans, polyunsaturated, monounsaturated and total fat.

For every other food—including those that are likely to have high levels of trans fat—the only requirement is to list the amount of total and saturated fat.

The argument against labelling is that if people focus too much on



trans fat, they may unnecessarily limit important food groups such as meat and dairy. "We must not base decisions concerning food supply on what is happening in countries like the US," says Hewat.

However, senior food policy officer, Clare Hughes in Australia believes consumers have the right to know what they're eating. "Not every biscuit will have trans fat. We should be providing people with information."

FSANZ is now proposing to allow food manufacturers to claim that a product "low in trans fatty acids and saturated fat can reduce the risk of heart disease."

### **Q| What else is being done?**

Most governments do not regulate trans fats, although non-regulatory measures are in place to help reduce trans fat levels. Many fast food companies including McDonald's, KFC and Burger King have started working towards such reductions.

In Malaysia and Singapore, health awareness campaigns highlight the negative effects of trans fat. The Health Promotion Board in Singapore also works with food manufacturers to re-formulate the composition of

food products to achieve lower levels of trans fat.

### **Q| What can I do to minimize my own trans fat intake?**

You can bring down levels of naturally occurring trans fats by trimming fat from meat and choosing lean cuts. "You can have lean meat even on a cholesterol-lowering diet, but make sure you don't eat the fat," says Dr Peter Clifton, co-author of *Total Wellbeing Diet*.

Butter contains trans fat and is also high in saturated fat, so using a high-quality margarine is an acceptable alternative.

Steer clear of manufactured cakes and pastries, particularly chocolate biscuits and doughnuts, which have the highest levels of saturated fats.

Other ways of staying healthy are to eat more fruit and vegetables, so you're less likely to be eating bad fats. Also, choose reduced-fat dairy products and try to avoid toasted mueslis for breakfast.

Restaurants and fast food chains can be healthy if you choose wisely. Deep-fried foods may contain trans fat, especially if they come from a smaller chain or your local take-away restaurant.

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## IL DUCE WAS EATEN?

**An unexpected guest** dropped in at our home one morning but she declined breakfast because she'd already had her favourite cereal.

"No thanks, I've just had Mussolini," she said.

S.N., Mumbai



# STARING DOWN MY DEMONS

BY SIMON BOUDA

When a veteran news reporter flew to Papua New Guinea to cover the deaths of nine people in a light plane crash, he had to overcome the emotional wounds of his childhood and venture to a country he swore he would never visit





hen news stories break, I can almost feel it—sense it. Nearly 20

years in a television newsroom does that to you.

“Can you be on a plane up to Papua New Guinea tonight?”

“Sure.” I was hesitant. “What’s happened?”

“There’s been a plane crash ... a bunch of Aussies on board.”

The wheels were set in motion and tickets booked, while I pondered the mission: Papua New Guinea (PNG)—a place I decided some time ago I never wanted to visit. My father and grandfather died there so it’s not a place where my male lineage has had great success.



My grandfather, George Heads, was a flight lieutenant in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). On a mission in PNG during World War II he was piloting a plane when he flew through a cloud—and into the side of a mountain near Milne Bay. There were no survivors. The wreckage was never found. His remains are still somewhere up there in the dense jungle. He was 33 years old.

Fast forward to April 1976, when my father, Jerry Bouda, was working as an accountant for a chain of hotels in PNG. I had not seen Dad for about two years. My parents separated when I was young but, at the age of 14, I was planning to fly from Sydney to spend my school holidays with him in Mt Hagen in the PNG highlands.

A week before I was due to leave, I tried ringing Dad to let him know my flight details. Full of excitement, I dialled the number he had given me during our last correspondence. With the air ticket in my hand, I listened to the international dialling tones as my call went through. “My name is Simon Bouda; can I please speak with my father, Jerry?”

The voice at the other end of the line hesitated, before saying, “Jerry passed the other day.”

“Passed?” I was confused. “Has he gone to another hotel?”

“No, hold on,” they replied. Then a man came on the line—his English was somewhat better. He explained that my father had died two days earlier. He’d had a heart attack while having a drink of Scotch at the end of the day.



**LEFT: Simon Bouda with cameraman Ben Williamson covering the story.**

**ABOVE: Owen Stanley Range, where the light plane crashed.**

He always did like his Scotch.

What could I say? I sat in stunned silence as the man offered his condolences. As an only child, I suddenly felt very alone. I rang my mother and told her what had happened and, despite their differences, she was distraught. Maybe for me, or maybe for my father—probably both.

All I knew was that a man who I never really got to know—or understand—was gone from my life. I had feelings of loss that I never thought I'd have.

## The job at hand

Sitting at Sydney airport, the call came to board QF502 to Brisbane—the first leg of the trip to PNG's capital city, Port Moresby. Travelling with me was cameraman Ben Williamson and sound assistant Mitch Wall.

I had just spent a sleepless night

after being assigned this job. *Bite the bullet*, I told myself. *Face the demons—stare them down.*

My palms were sweaty as we climbed aboard. Apart from my reservations about visiting a country that had claimed the lives of my father and grandfather, this trip also meant I would miss my son's 14th birthday—a parallel that wasn't lost on me.

As with most news stories that we're sent to cover, I didn't get time to ponder much more than the task at hand—and that in itself was packed with emotion.

Nine Australians had died on the Airlines PNG Twin Otter—all of them trekkers heading for Kokoda to follow



Bouda at Bomana War Cemetery, Port Moresby, next to the headstone of his grandfather, Flight Lieutenant George Heads.

in the footsteps of their forefathers and countless others. But the notoriously bad—and unpredictable—weather forced the pilot to abort the first attempt to land at Kokoda Airstrip. On the second attempt, the pilot flew through a cloud and into the side of the Owen Stanley Range. All on board the flight perished.

To cover the story, we enlisted the services of a local pilot. David Inau runs Pacific Helicopters. He knows the Owen Stanley ranges like the back of his hand—he understands their beauty and respects their dangers.

“Can you get us up near the wreckage?” I asked.

“No problem,” he replied.

It might have been “no problem” for him, but by this stage, my nerves were stretched.

*Bite the bullet—face the demons, stare them down.*

The first flight we took followed

the Kokoda Track. As I stared out of the window I couldn’t help but wonder if my grandfather’s plane wreck was somewhere down there—swallowed by the dense jungle. I’m used to flying—I’m in the news helicopter at least once a week. But flying up there gave me the creeps and every little bump had me glancing nervously towards the pilot. The calm expression on his face was the reassurance I needed.

After five days of coverage, and numerous flights, the Sydney newsroom decided it was time to bring us back—the mission was complete. For me, though, the mission was far from over.

On the phone that night I spoke with



news director Darren Wick. "Wickie," I began. "I have a favour to ask." After explaining that both my father and grandfather were buried somewhere in PNG, I asked for a couple of extra days to complete my personal mission—to find them both.

## **Journey to my grandfather**

Locating the memorial to my grandfather was relatively easy. After calling my mother and uncle, I was directed to Bomana War Cemetery, on the outskirts of Port Moresby.

It's one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. Close to 4000 marble headstones mark the deaths of Allied servicemen killed during the conflict. The headstones nestle among neat gardens, lovingly manicured. It truly was breathtaking.

At one end of the cemetery is a small shelter. Inside it is a small cupboard with a register of the headstones, a brief history of the PNG battles and a visitors' book. I wrote my name and one word: "Breathtaking". There was nothing more to say. The register read: *HEADS, Lieutenant, GEORGE, 400027. Royal Australian Air Force. 7th June 1944. Age 33. Fit. Son of George Michael Heads, and of Verena Annie Heads (nee Cary). A3. D.20.*

Off I wandered, making a beeline for the row where Flight Lieutenant George Heads' headstone was indicated as standing. There, among thousands of others, I found it. Tears welled up in my eyes—don't ask me why. I can't explain it. Perhaps it was

**As I stared out of the helicopter, I wondered if my grandpa's plane wreck was down there.**

the near exhaustion of five days of extremely hard and tiring work. More likely it was the raw emotion of finally being so close to a tangible link to the grandfather I never knew.

I worked my camera overtime, snapping photographs from every possible angle.

I wasn't alone. Walking among the headstones was a group of Australian soldiers, who also seemed overcome by the solemnity of this haunting memorial. It's a place where you could just walk for hours, reading the names of those who lost their lives defending our shores.

Glancing to my left, I looked across the road. There in view of George's headstone stood the goalposts of a rugby league field. Funny how things turn out. My uncle, Ian Heads—George's son—is a respected rugby league and sports journalist.

Emotionally spent, I left the cemetery and made my way to the Australian High Commission. They were used to my face down there by

now, as I had covered a number of media briefings on the trekkers' plane crash. I explained that I wanted to fly to Mt Hagen in a bid to locate my father's grave.

"Be careful," I was advised. "Mt Hagen is not particularly safe. Make sure you phone ahead to arrange a car and a driver."

This was invaluable advice. At my hotel, I called Avis car rentals in Mt Hagen. I had already booked a flight out of Port Moresby, leaving 8:45am the next day.

"No sir, I am sorry we don't have any cars for tomorrow," I was told.

"Is there nothing you can do?" I asked, then went on to explain my mission.

"Not to worry, sir," came the reply after an initial pause. "I will take care of it."

## **Journey to my father**

Air Nuigini Flight PX 0180 landed in Mt Hagen at 9:45am. Walking across the tarmac towards the terminal, I wondered if maybe this was a waste

**Some graves were lovingly tended—they were under lock and key—but most had run to ruin.**

of time—I had no idea of where to start.

*Bite the bullet—face the demons, stare them down.*

Bustled along with the crowd, I made my way to the Avis counter inside the tiny arrivals hall. There, I met Solomon Wokolon—the manager of the Mt Hagen branch. "Welcome," he said with a beaming smile. "Come with me."

"Don't I need to sign a contract for the car?"

"No, no, no, come with me," he said reassuringly.

"But what about a driver?"

"It is no problem—I will take you in my car."

Solomon explained that he would happily help me on my mission. He had only recently lost his own father.

"Where to?" he asked, as I climbed into a pick-up truck with caged windows.

Good question.

In the early '80s, a policeman friend of mine on secondment to the Royal PNG Constabulary had tried to find my father's grave on my behalf. His investigation and government records led him to the Mt Hagen Public Cemetery—but that was where the trail ran cold. He was confident, though, that it was the right place.

"Can you take me to the government offices?" I asked Solomon.

My plan was to check the place where the records of births, deaths and marriages were kept—they should have records of precisely where he was buried.



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Jerry Bouda, Simon's father; Jerry holding baby Simon in 1962; Jerry as Simon remembers him, in the early 1970s. Jerry died in Papua New Guinea in 1976, a week before Simon was due to visit.

"I'm sorry," Solomon explained, "the raskols burnt it down." Raskols in PNG are violent young hoodlums and Mt Hagen has no shortage of them.

"I guess we'd better head to the public cemetery."

A short time later, we pulled up on a potholed road. I looked across a gully to what appeared to be a cemetery. To say it was crude is an understatement. Some graves were clearly lovingly tended—they were under lock and key. Most had run to ruin. Some headstones once boasted brass plaques engraved with the details of the loved one who'd died; but these were now long gone—stolen and probably sold for the metal value.

We began wandering around, trying to find any headstones with dates.

Condom packets and rubbish littered the ground. I don't know why, but I had just assumed my dad's grave would have been marked with a headstone.

In my pocket, I carried a photo of my wife, Karin, and our two kids, Erin and Max. My plan was to leave it on Dad's headstone—introduce him to the grandchildren he never knew. But after an hour we found no trace, nothing. Feeling very despondent, I suggested we head to the Mt Hagen Hotel.

"Does it still exist?" I asked Solomon.

"Yes, sir, but it has changed name."

Driving through Mt Hagen is an experience. Most of the buildings are heavily fortified, especially hotels



favoured by tourists. Arriving at what was once the Mt Hagen Hotel, we passed through the security gate and, as I glanced left and right, I couldn't help but notice the razor wire that hung on top of the compound walls. The hotel was a fortress.

Inside, however, it was quite beautiful. Ponds, gardens, modest rooms and an office adjoining the bar—the bar where my father died.

I was hoping to find someone who, 33 years on, would remember my dad. Was it too much to ask? We met the young receptionist and I explained what I was investigating. She asked us to wait while she checked with the

manager. “No, sir, I am sorry but no one was working here that long ago.”

Time was running out. It was about 11:30am and my return flight to Port Moresby was leaving at 3pm. Where to now?

As we drove out of the hotel compound, we stopped and Solomon had a conversation with the security guard in Pidgin. He looked about my age, so he would have been in his teens when my dad worked there.

“Yes, I think I remember Jerry,” he said. “I was young, but I think I remember him—he was a good man.”

“Can you tell me anything about how he died or where he's buried?” I asked as Solomon translated.

“No, I am sorry—I was too young.” This was fast going nowhere.

“Where to now?” Solomon asked. I had no idea. “Why don't we try the

At the bar where his father, Jerry, died, Bouda shares a drink with Solomon Wokolon, the man who helped him with his quest.



old bowling club," he suggested. "My wife works there—maybe if he was a member, there might be records."

It was just a short drive away. Like the hotel, the bowling club was surrounded by heavy security—barbed wire and big gates. The burnt-out government offices were next door.

Despite her best efforts, Solomon's wife had no luck—the records did not go back that far. We even checked the trophy boards to see if my dad had won anything. Again, no luck.

Feeling less and less hopeful, I asked to be taken to the heart of the town. As it turned out we were already there, so I took out my camera and began snapping away—at least I would have some photographs of the town where my father died all those years ago.

"What about the Catholic cemetery?" Solomon suggested.

The Catholic cemetery is much better tended than the public cemetery. At least most of the graves are marked and the headstones and plaques are intact. For about an hour we wandered among the graves, again coming up empty-handed.

As we climbed back into Solomon's pick-up, his phone rang. He was speaking in Pidgin; I had no idea what was being said. But after hanging up, he looked at me and smiled.

"That was my wife," he said. "She has found someone who knows a man who may have known your father. It's just a short drive from here." Soon after, we pulled up outside a ramshackle cottage on the outskirts of Mt Hagen.

I waited nervously in the car as

Solomon went inside. A group of men sat in the front yard playing a card game and chewing on betel nuts. None looked my way. A short time later, Solomon returned with a man wearing a baseball cap and a flannelette shirt. "Simon, this is Roy Kumbi," he said.

"Mr Kumbi, nice to meet you," I said, shaking his hand. "I don't know if you can help, but I am trying to find anyone who knew my father, Jerry Bouda."

"JERRY!" he exclaimed. "Jerry was my best friend—I held him in my arms as he died."

Oh my God. I was a blubbing mess and all but collapsed into his arms. I could hear a woman who witnessed the scene burst into tears as well. "Tell me what happened."

Roy explained that my father had finished work for the day and had just sat down at the hotel bar for a drink, inviting Roy to join him. Roy, though, still had more work to do and said he'd be there shortly.

As my father downed his first glass of Black Label Johnny Walker, he collapsed, falling off his bar stool. A cleaner rushed in to Roy and said something was very wrong. Roy ran out, shouting for someone to call a doctor as he cradled my father's head in his arms. It was there he took his last breath.

To say I was astonished on hearing this account simply doesn't capture the intensity of my emotion.

"Do you know where he's buried?" I asked.

"Yes," Roy said. "I buried him."



**Bouda stands with Roy Kumbi, the man who held his dying father 33 years earlier, near the gravesite at the public cemetery.**

“Can you take me there?”

As we piled into the truck, a number of other men at the house clambered in, too. After a short drive, we were back at the public cemetery where, three hours earlier, I’d begun my search.

“It is here,” said Roy. As we trudged up the hillside—followed by a seemingly growing group of followers—Roy pointed to four mounds of dirt.

“It’s one of these,” he said. “I am sorry, but I cannot remember which one—it is too long ago.”

It didn’t matter. I knew my father was here. I had finally found him.

Not only had I found my dad, but I’d also met my father’s own “fuzzy wuzzy angel”; the man who cradled

him as he died. I thanked Roy profusely and asked if he would mind leaving me alone for a while. Everyone piled back into the truck and drove away.

Suddenly I was alone on the hillside, sitting in the middle of four piles of dirt knowing that I was now—after 33 years—close to my dad.

There was nowhere to leave the photo of my family—but that didn’t matter. I sat there for about an hour, just talking to my dad. The locals must have thought I was some crazy white man. But for the first time I was able to explain to him about my life and my beautiful family—and, most important of all, I was finally able to say goodbye.

People talk about closure, but for me the search for my father’s and my grandfather’s final resting places felt more than that. For me, I had finally found completeness. ■





# RD Living

## Spotlight on a Hidden Cancer Risk

**Artificial lighting** may help explain increasing breast and prostate cancer rates

**N**ight falls, so you flick on your lights. But a shocking theory has been gaining support in the past few years: that artificial light at night may contribute to breast and prostate cancers, perhaps because it turns down production of the hormone melatonin. Now two studies add weight to that idea.

One, from Israel's University of Haifa, analyzed satellite measurements of night-time light and cancer rates in 164 countries. The most brightly lit had the highest rates of prostate cancer, more than double those in the dimmest nations. Meanwhile, Harvard researchers who tracked more

than 18,000 postmenopausal women reported that those with the lowest nighttime levels of melatonin were about 60 percent more likely to develop breast cancer.

It's known that light suppresses the brain's production of melatonin. The hormone may play a role in immunity or help slow the growth of cancer, according to Richard G. Stevens, PhD, a co-author of the Israeli study. So how can you minimize the possible risk posed by modern lighting—without going preindustrial?

**Sleep in as dark a room as possible.** Use room-darkening

blinds or shades if you live on a bright, urban street or have a streetlamp outside your window.

**Keep a night-light in the bathroom for midnight visits instead of turning on the overhead.** Even brief exposure to light can suppress melatonin.

A red bulb is best: Red wavelengths cause a less precipitous drop in levels of the hormone than blue wavelengths, such as those in halogen and fluorescent lighting.

**Eat breakfast by the window.**

A 20-minute dose of sunlight will reset your natural circadian rhythms and help ensure a healthy nighttime melatonin peak.

*Beth Howard*

## Can Your Cola Habit

**Soft drinks can** raise your blood pressure. According to a new study, adults who consumed more than 74 grams of fructose per day—the amount in two-and-a-half colas—increased their likelihood of developing high blood pressure by 36 percent. That's in addition to a bloated risk of obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay. And diet cola may not be any safer. In a recent Harvard Medical School study, women who

drank two or more servings of artificially sweetened cola daily were found to have double the risk of kidney function decline, which can destroy that organ. For all soft drinks, the devil's in the dose, so make cola a special treat, or at least practise portion control. Cola fans, take note: If you must have it, cut it down to half a bottle or glass. And there's always the best option: drink water instead.

*Janis Graham*



## Dose it Safely

It's so easy to pull out a kitchen spoon to give or take a dose of liquid medicine. But it's a bad idea, shows a new study from Cornell University, USA. When people used a medium-size tablespoon, they underdosed by more than eight percent, on average—even after they saw the correct amount. Using a larger spoon, they overdosed by nearly 12 percent. Those errors could be dangerous if you're taking a medicine two or three times per day—or giving even a single dose to a child, says study co-author Koert van Ittersum, PhD. So stick to droppers meant for medicines, dosing cups, or dosing syringes.

Other stay-safe tips: Don't split sustained-, controlled-, or extended-release tablets—that dumps the medicine all at once. Don't halve pills with an enteric coating either. Do remove an old transdermal patch before putting on a new one. A patch can release medicine even after it's time to toss it.

B.H.



**One shared soap.  
Many germ-infected hands.**

**No more** ➡





## How to Brew the Perfect Cup of Tea

**Storage** Keep tea in a sealed container away from light, heat and moisture.

**Tea** Place one level teaspoon of tea for each cup of water into a teapot. There's no need to add another spoonful "for the pot." While tea bags offer convenience, loose leaves generally have a more refined flavour. "It's like comparing a four-litre cask of wine with a bottle."

**Water** Add fresh water that you've brought to a rolling boil. For green teas, use water cooler than 70 degrees C to avoid an astringent or bitter flavour.

**Brew** Leave to brew for at least three minutes. Look at the size of the tea leaves—generally, the

larger the leaves, the longer they need to brew.

**Milk and sugar** Adding milk or sugar comes down to personal preference, but it can mask the more subtle of white, green, oolong and some black teas.

**Enjoy** Savour the ritual. Perhaps the main health benefit of tea comes from the process of taking a break from your day and focusing on making a pot and enjoying it.

*Sophie McNamara*

### MOUTH AID

Drinking green tea can help prevent mouth cancers, says the US Academy of General Dentistry. The tea contains polyphenols—antioxidants that remove free radicals that cause gene mutation. They also kill off cancerous cells that may be present and prevent them from spreading. The catch is that a person needs to slurp four to six cups of green tea a day to get the benefits. However, actually drinking it isn't necessary: You can swish and rinse those four to six cups.

*The Toronto Star*

## Granny's Tips: Myth or Marvel?

**J**ust like your mum didn't need a thermometer to know if you had a fever, we bet your grandmother didn't let the absence of a medical degree stop her from issuing health directives. But which ones are worth following?

**Gran's wisdom** Swimming after eating can lead to cramps and drowning.

**Science says** Not exactly, but not completely wrong. After eating, blood gets shunted to the digestive tract and away from exercising muscles. That can lead to a build-up of lactic acid in your muscles, so swimming soon after lunch could cause a sudden (though not fatal) cramp.

**Gran's wisdom** Honey speeds healing.

**Science says** Yes. Mild to moderate burns (but not other types of wounds) heal faster if you spread honey on them, perhaps because it creates a moist, antibacterial environment that promotes tissue growth.

**Gran's wisdom** Butter helps heal burns.

**Science says** No. There's no evidence of a healing benefit from butter.

**Gran's wisdom** Sleeping in an AC room can give you a chill.

## Science says She may

be on to something. Air-conditioners dry out the protective layer of mucus along nasal passages and make your nose cold—both of which make it easier for a virus to infect you.

**Gran's wisdom** If you go out with wet hair, you'll catch a cold.

**Science says** Maybe. Some research indicates (but doesn't prove) that a wet head helps cold viruses take hold by tightening blood vessels in the nose and making it harder for white blood cells to reach the viruses and fight them off.

**Gran's wisdom** An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

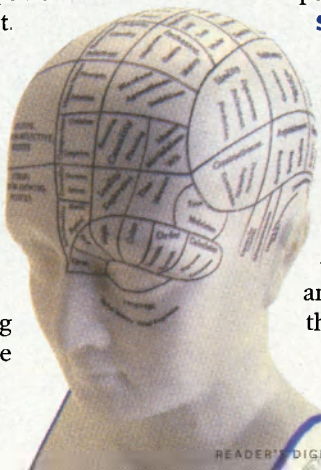
**Science says** Gran's overstating the fruit's potency. Still, the peel is a very good source of antioxidants.

**Gran's wisdom** Ginger is good for upset stomachs.

**Science says** Yes. There is good evidence that ginger reduces nausea.

**Gran's wisdom** Eating chocolate gives you pimples.

**Science says** Not quite. Chocolate might trigger an acne flare-up, but if so, the culprit is probably the sugar, milk and gooey fillings, not the cocoa.





## Catch Us if You Can

**K**ids may be getting fatter, but older people are taking to sport like never before. Want to join in? Follow these precautions:

**See your GP** Aside from checking your pulse, blood pressure and weight, he may recommend a fitness assessment to see what you can take.

**Choose carefully** Weight-bearing exercise fights osteoporosis, but sports such as running can strain bones and joints. Swimming, cycling or rowing offer more support for your weight so age matters less.

**Don't go it alone** You're likelier to keep it up if you exercise with others. "Join a gym or club," advises triathlete Daphne Belt, 64.

**Watch your diet** "Most of us eat too much fat," says sports scientist Henryk Lakomy. Think more rotis and pulses. And cut back on alcohol.

**Warm up and stretch** This gets more important as you get older. Stretch again at the end of exercise.

**Take time to recover** "Rest is part of training, even more at my age," says runner Bill Birmingham, 53.

**Take it slowly** To avoid injury, seek help with a step-by-step program. Don't set big targets for yourself. Start in small ways, like taking the stairs for a few floors instead of the lift.

## MIDNIGHT SNACKS ADD UP

**A new study suggests** calories count for more if they're eaten when you ought to be sleeping. When researchers from Northwestern University in the US fed mice during the day—when these animals normally sleep—the rodents gained more weight than mice that ate at night, when they're usually active. In fact, although the two groups ate equal

amounts of food and got the same amount of exercise, the day-fed mice ended up gaining more than twice as much weight. Other studies hint that the effect holds true for humans, too. Still, the researchers say, maths always trumps timing: if you regularly consume more calories than you burn, you will gain weight regardless of when you eat.



## Keep Kids Safe From Dog Bites

**D**ogs can make great playmates for kids. Here's

how to minimize your child's chances of being bitten by one:

- Never leave an infant or small child unattended with a dog.

- A dog with a history of biting should be confined or restrained in the presence of small children.

- Teach your children that unfamiliar dogs—no matter how small, cute or fluffy—should not be touched or approached without adult permission.

- Children should be taught to respect their pets; this includes not disturbing them while they're eating, sleeping, or chewing or playing with a toy or bone.

- Dogs should never be cornered against a wall or furniture, or in their resting places.

- Kids should be taught to walk away slowly—



### Risk Factors

> **Boys** are bitten at **twice the rate** of girls.

> Children **ages 5 to 9** are bitten **most frequently**.

> Children who **own dogs** are **more likely to be bitten** than those who don't. P.L.

and not to run—when confronted by a growling dog.

- Children should avoid close face-to-face contact with dogs.

- Puppy owners should expose their young dogs to a variety of other pets as well as children of different ages. Familiarity reduces fear.

- Dogs should not be left unattended outdoors for long periods of time.

- Non-neutered male dogs are more likely to bite than are neutered ones, so consider sterilization for your pet.

*Peter Lopatin, Webvet.com*

A

E

# iChallenge!

BY ALICE VARKEY

**Vowel:** A speech sound in which your mouth is open and the tongue is not touching the top of the mouth or teeth. It also describes an alphabet that represents such sounds. The five English vowels are a, e, i, o, and u. You need vowels and other letters (known as consonants) to make most words. But relatively few English words use all the five vowels and we have used 15 of them in this quiz. So, using the clues on the left, try getting the words by filling in the missing consonants. **Example: Climber (MOUNTAINEER)**

M O U N T A I N E E R

A a

I i

1	Lung trouble	-	-	E	U	-	O	-	I	A				
2	Confusion	-	A	-	-	E	-	O	-	I	U	-		
3	Showy	O	-	-	E	-	-	A	-	I	O	U	-	
4	Discussion	-	I	A	-	O	-	U	E					
5	Excitement	E	U	-	-	O	-	I	A					
6	Form	-	U	E	-	-	I	O	-	-	A	I	-	E
7	Radical	-	E	-	O	-	U	-	I	O	-	A	-	-
8	Disrespectful	-	A	-	-	I	-	E	-	I	O	U	-	
9	Fame	-	E	-	U	-	A	-	I	O	-			
10	Musical instrument	-	A	-	-	O	U	-	I	-	E			
11	Determined	-	E	-	A	-	I	O	U	-				
12	Concurrent	-	I	-	U	-	-	A	-	E	O	U	-	
13	Various	-	I	-	-	E	-	-	A	-	E	O	U	-
14	Sociable	-	-	E	-	A	-	I	O	U	-			
15	Uncertain	-	-	E	-	A	-	I	O	U	-			

**Answers** 1) Pneumonia. 2) Pandemonium. 3) Ostentatious. 4) Dialogue. 5) Euphoria. 6) Questionnaire. 7) Revolutionary. 8) Sacrilegious. 9) Reputation. 10) Tambourine. 11) Tenacious. 12) Simultaneous. 13) Miscellaneous. 14) Gregarious. 15) Precarious.



**"MUSK DEER" BY GULAMMOHAMMED SHEIKH, GOUACHE, 31 x 41 CM, 1998**

One of a series of works by Sheikh inspired by the verse of the mystic 15-century poet Kabir. The noted Baroda-based painter (born 1937) uses brilliant colour, line and landscape to capture the romance of musk and Kabir's allusion to it. Kabir compared musk to God, saying that although the musk is within the deer, the deer does not look for it—suggesting that each of us should find God within ourselves.